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O F

MAHOMET.

Translated from the French Original, written by the

Count of BOULAINVILLIERS.



L O N D O N :

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MDCCLII.



T H E
TRANSLATOR'S
P R E F A C E.

THE idea of Mahomet, which the Count of Boulainvilliers here presents us with, is so new and surprizing, so different, and even contrary to all that we have hitherto been taught concerning him; and the reflections he has scatter'd throughout his work, are so various, judicious, lively, and beautiful, that we must be destitute of all taste and curiosity, if we are not at once entertained and instructed by this singular performance. The dignity of his thoughts, and the sublimity of his diction, are suited to the lofty manners and characters of those eastern nations he so finely describes; and that with so masterly a pen, with such comprehensive learning, and profound reading, that we scarcely believe his own frank confession that he understood not Arabick; so perfect, and well appointed does he appear, so thoroughly qualify'd for his labour, and so equal to his undertaking in every respect.

All I am in pain for, is, lest the boundless freedom of some of his reflections should be thought by some well-meaning people to bear too hard upon the Christian religion; and induce them to
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censure the author, as an equal enemy to the Christian name with that formidable Arabian whose life he writes.

But less vulgar minds will have penetration enough to discern, that almost every thing of this kind respects only those corruptions which the adulterous church of Rome has introduced, to the destruction of real Christianity. Of which communion nevertheless, our noble author was obliged to profess himself a member; as he lived in a country, where civil and ecclesiastical tyranny are combined in the glorious design of suppressing reason, truth, and freedom. And what wonder is it, that a man of sense and learning, and knowledge of the world and mankind, should be offended and scandalized at the profane superstitions, and gross pollutions of Popery?

I cannot forbear adding here (and this the rather, as I have been informed lately that Popish emissaries now swarm among us) that when I reflect upon the monstrous apostasy of the Romanists; when I think on their invocation of angels, on their worship of demons, the adoration of their Virgin-Queen of Heaven, their devotions to whole armies of dead men and women, and the horrible absurdity of their wafer-god; and above all, when I consider the seas of blood they have shed, and the execrable cruelties they make use of to this very day, to bind all this senseless blasphemy and idolatry upon the reluctant minds of men, by racks and fires, and tortures; I am at a loss to know what worse religion could be embraced. What more affronting to
G O D,

G O D, and the one Mediator between G O D and man: What, more outrageous to human reason. It makes me call to mind the just value express'd for it by a shrewd Northern Monarch, who, when Pope Gregory the XIth threaten'd him with excommunication for some failure of respect towards the apostolick see, writ him the following arch epistle.

WALDEMAR, King of Denmark, &c. To the Bishop of ROME, greeting.

“ We hold our life from G O D; our kingdom from our subjects; our riches from our parents; and our faith from T H E E; which if thou wilt not grant us any longer, we do by these presents resign. Farewell.”

But to return to my author; he has thought fit to make a voluntary declaration of his being a Christian, tho' 'tis plain he despised and abhorred Popery; and, I think, no man of candour ought to refuse him the common right of being believed.

This history abounds with the most refined sentiments, and excellent documents. The prospect of the infinite disputes, and violent animosities of the Christian World, of which it must be confessed Dr. Prideaux movingly complains, and which G O D so remarkably punished by the arms of the Musulmen, may teach us at this day prudence and charity, caution, and mutual forbearance; and should abate the pride of those presumptuous men, who arrogantly seat themselves in the tribunal of G O D, and dispense damnation among their fellow creatures with an unsparing hand, for no other crime but not calling them masters upon earth,

earth, and not subscribing to their absolute definitions of truths impenetrable to the human mind, and of which, perhaps, the very angels themselves have no adequate conception. At least, to our own shame and confusion, we may most surely conclude, that those superior intelligences, far from taking occasion from the incomprehensibility of the divine nature, to persecute, grieve, and devour one another, enquire and look into these awful mysteries with more innocence and modesty, and with an assurance less rash and peremptory.

Neither can it be unseasonable in these our times, when luxury and corruption prevail, when rapine and oppression triumph, when sordid selfishness, and its eternal concomitant, hardness of heart, have swallow'd up all regard to the good of others, all generosity, all humanity, and even common justice; I say, in such times, it cannot be unseasonable to set before men's eyes some amiable examples of the contrary virtues; nor ought it to be taken amiss if we desire such Christians to learn integrity, temperance, benevolence, and liberality, even from Saracens, Turks, and Mahometans.

Nothing remains, but to advertise the reader, that in the orthography of the Arabick names, I have chiefly followed Dr. Prideaux, and the Rev. Mr. Ockley, who have already written in English upon the affairs of the Arabians.

THE
L I F E
O F
MAHOMET.

BOOK I.

Containing a Description of Arabia, and the Manners of its Inhabitants, as also of the Cities of Mecca and Medina. The antient History of that Country, with Reflexions upon the Religion of Mahomet, and the Customs establish'd among its Professors.



HE world is a vast theatre, whereon, in every age, some distinguish'd tragedy is acted, under the direction of a supreme governour, who dispenses to the several nations good or evil, prosperity or adversity, according to his good pleasure and justice. If among these various scenes, there are many that might seem private and particular, either because they pass in silence and obscurity, or because they only respect distinct cities, kingdoms or countries; yet we may discern in them

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something so grand, and at the same time so general, as even to concern the whole race of mankind, and almost affect universal nature.

Such was the spectacle which arose in Arabia about the beginning of the 7th century, to the astonishment of all the world; the dismal effects whereof, were, the swallowing up of Christianity in the East, the destruction of the most antient and well-founded Empires, the overthrow of an infinite number of renowned cities, and the utter extirpation of arts, sciences and learning from the face of the earth, by a people, who defacing every monument, and burning every library, declar'd their intent to abolish the very memorial of all former generations.

The Barbarians who destroy'd the Roman Empire, never spread such havock, desolation, and darkness. They were better'd by the happier climates, into which fortune conducted them. When they left their own frozen, barren, and uncultivated country, they discover'd plenty and riches, which before they had never known; yet less smitten with them, than with the desire of knowledge and learning, they assum'd the religion and manners of the nations they subdu'd; insomuch, that had they had time sufficient to polish themselves in the countries where they settled, the foot-steps of their Invasion would perhaps have appear'd but very faintly. Then came several successions of these Barbarians, who drove away the first comers, and made the West, for three hundred years, the prize of wandering conquerors, who did more mischief to the countries they forsook, than to those that they visited. On the contrary the Arabians, although an ingenious people, generous,

rous, open, brave, wise, and free from those untameable passions, which the irregularity of the seasons infuse into the rugged breasts of the Northern nations, yet did they carry more miseries through the world, and overspread it with a greater degree of ignorance and stupidity, than that, which the mighty genius of the Greeks and Romans had dissipated and reclaim'd in a course of fifteen hundred or two thousand years. Seiz'd with a religious enthusiasm, they were all at once excited to so cruel a conduct, as it were by enchantment; an enthusiasm, founded upon the high estimation they had conceiv'd of that book, wherein their religion is contain'd, which they assert to be the sublimest effect of the Divine Wisdom, as it contains eternal truths, which GOD himself was pleas'd to reveal to men, such as no imagination of the most exalted creature could conceive or express, but such as essentially exist, and which Infinite Wisdom itself vouchsaf'd to declare, for the illumination of every intelligent being. This opinion of theirs is the principle to which their contempt of all other sciences is to be ascrib'd.

There are two circumstances particularly remarkable in this revolution, consider'd in itself, independantly of its consequences. The first is, that it was unforeseen, as it was unimaginable; and secondly, that it was of greater extent than any that is recorded in history. These singular distinctions deserve attention so much, that it is highly fit some one of all the learned, with which Europe abounds, should oblige the publick with so curious a history.

Nevertheless, we remain almost wholly unacquainted with this wonderful story. We admire and eager-

ly explore the histories of Greece and Italy, and seem all this while scarcely to know the grandeur of Mahomet; though had not that mighty founder of the Arabian monarchy, prejudic'd us against him on a religious account by his introducing a new worship, we should easily have allow'd him to have erected an Empire more extensive and more formidable than either that of the Macedonians or that of the Romans. The truth is, we are apt, at this day, to consider the Mahometan Religion only as a monstrous fiction, settled by force of arms among weak and unwarlike nations, and maintain'd there by the ignorance and prejudice of those that first receiv'd it; so that terror being no longer an attendant on Mahometanism, our curiosity languishes, and we look upon this subject but with scornful regards. And yet we may truly say, that no history can boast events, that strike the imagination in a more lively manner, or can be more surprizing in themselves, than those we meet with in the lives of the first Musulmen; whether we consider their Great Chief, or his ministers the most illustrious of men; whether we take an account of the manners of the several countries he conquer'd; or observe the courage, virtue, and sentiments, that equally prevail'd among his generals and soldiers. This made an eminent author say, that the Greek and Latin history could not triumph, in any of these respects, over that of the Arabians. And yet we see the former is actually preferr'd to the latter; probably not so much from want of taste, as the neglect of the Oriental languages, which are still living,

living, while at the same time we study with intense application the dead tongues which have perpetuated the story of the Greeks and Romans.

However, I would not by this observation be thought to censure a study to which alone we owe the happy return of politeness and true taste, after a tedious barbarism. But in my mind it is far from being impossible to unite the pursuit of one and the other; and we might make an excellent use of the illustrious examples that the Arabian history yields us, (not to mention here those lively strokes of the most piercing eloquence, even beyond the most pompous flights of Greece and Rome) which represents to our view such characters of generosity and elevation of soul, as are very rarely to be met with among the Western nations.

Justly, therefore it is to be lamented that so few of the learned have apply'd themselves to understand Arabick, and that of those few, still fewer should extend their studies to the benefit of the publick, by translating some of those manuscripts in the king's library, where they lie in the greatest plenty. The late M. Harbelot has heretofore shewn us in a book, which, unfortunately, was not publish'd till after his death, how greatly we might augment our knowledge, and add incitements to our sluggish thoughts, by a just translation of so many monuments as we have of the virtue of these Arabians, whom their distance from us, and difference in religion, occasions us to regard merely as a barbarous people. For my own part, I confess, I do not understand Arabick, and consequently for want of that, I am altogether

unable to draw from their original springs. Yet am I so struck with the wonders in that history, I cannot deny my self the satisfaction of collecting into one body, all that I have learnt of it in the common way, and from the translations of several unconnected pieces. The instruction of the publick is not the thing I propose. I only intend to employ my self; and to stir my self up to labour, of which old Age stands in need, as the vivacity and force of the blood forsake us.

It is generally known, that Arabia is a great Peninsula in Asia; bounded on the North by Túrky in Asia; on the East by the Persian gulf; on the South by the Indian ocean; and on the West by the Red-Sea, and the Isthmus of Suez. 'Tis likewise known, by the accounts of an infinite number of travellers, that the part of land which joins Arabia to the continent, is a country horrible for its enormous deserts, and uninhabitable, by reason of the deep sands which cover it, and the want of water, which is so general there, that a well is esteem'd the real riches of a district of fifteen leagues around it. No wonder then that the Arabians, though a very ancient people, and famous in tradition, were in reality so little known to the Greeks and Romans. They only knew in general that spices and perfumes were brought from Arabia through Egypt, which is very near it, being only separated by the Red-Sea. For the Egyptians, always intent upon the profits of commerce, cautiously held their ports shut to foreigners, and kept close the navigation of the Red-Sea, as a very great secret; for which reasons, it was impossible to make

a full discovery of Arabia through them: so that it was rather guess'd, than actually known, whether there was really a country of that name, abounding with gold and precious stones, with pearls and spices, and divers other natural rarities. Though strictly speaking, the greatest part of their riches is brought thither from India, and the Coasts of Africa. But as the idea of unknown things easily swells in the imagination, the agreeable name of Arabia the Happy was freely bestow'd on this country, to signify its abundant fertility, beyond even that of Egypt itself; and because nature had, besides all this, carefully conceal'd it from the greediness of other people, by those impenetrable deserts with which she had separated it from the rest of the world. Nevertheless, it is certain, that this epithet, Happy, little suits the nature of that country, which being situated in an exceeding hot climate, is neither compleatly cultivated, nor inhabited, save only in those places, where the shadow of their mountains, and the springs of water that rise there, yield some refreshment to the excessive heat which generally scorches them. So that we may confidently affirm this part of Arabia was call'd Happy, only by way of comparison with the two other parts of the same country, which the antients distinguish'd by the names of Arabia Deserta, and Arabia Petræa, where the immoderate heat has nothing to soften and allay it, but the earth is continually dry'd and burnt up, and exhibits no other prospects but sands and rocks. The antient Geographers accordingly divided Arabia into three principal parts, and gave them the aforesaid names, of the Desert, the Stony, and the Happy; but this

division was very unequal, for they gave to the first a greater extent than to both the other taken together, and the second was not a sixth part of the last.

Arabia the Desert, began, according to them, at the banks of the Euphrates towards the North and the East, from whence coasting the borders of Chaldea, it stretched along the sea unto Darhem, where is the pearl fishery, and so on to the sea of Oman, which is the Eastern point of the Peninsula; while towards the West it ran along by the borders of Syria, and the valley of Damascus, quite to the mountains of Seir, enclosing within that space the vast wilderness of Palmyra, called also Tadmor; the antient cities of Ana, Gassan, and Rahabah; the great Roman way built by the Emperor Trajan, that led to Ctesiphon; together with all the cities rais'd since the establishment of Mahometanism, of which Coufah is the chief.

Arabia the Stony, distinguish'd sometimes by the name of Madian, was extremely small in comparison of the preceding; since it contain'd only the mountains of Oreb and Sinai, between two points of the Red-Sea, together with a range of rocks contiguous to those mountains. And then Arabia the Happy contain'd indefinitely all the rest of the Peninsula, for its precise limits were never settled.

We might make a much better division of this vast country, and obtain a more exact knowledge of it, from the account the Holy Scripture gives of it, as divided among nations of very different characters and original, in the tenth chapter of Genesis. We there learn that those who inhabited the banks of Euphrates, and the gulf of Persia; were the descendants

ants of Ham, the son of Noah, by Cush his eldest son; that those who possess'd the Southern parts, and the mountains which fill'd the middle of the Peninsula, as also the greatest part of those who settled on the coast of the Red Sea, were the posterity of Shem, another son of Noah, by Joktan and his numerous issue, reckon'd up in that chapter; and lastly, that the inhabitants of Arabia the Stony were the race of Abraham, by his first born son Ismael, and by the children he had of Keturah his second wife.

Of all these different people, it was only to the children of Joktan, that the name of Arabians was appropriated, which they deriv'd from Jareb, the eldest son of that patriarch: these therefore have always been look'd upon as pure and natural Arabians, while all the rest, not excepting even the Ismaelites themselves, have been regarded as foreigners, and for that reason, surnam'd Most-Arabs or Mac-Arabs, terms denoting them to be of a distinct race and blood from the others. Yet, in spite of this distinction, the children and posterity of Abraham have always been of the highest estimation in Arabia: for he, having, pursuant to a general tradition spread over all the East, been universally esteem'd the eminent favourite of the Almighty, and the first teacher of a most perfect worship, was thought undoubtedly to have communicated to his children, together with the knowledge of the true God, all those advantages which he himself enjoy'd, by his peculiar blessing and favour. Upon this foot, 'tis to this day taken for granted, that the Arabians of the Desert (which may more properly be distinguish'd by the name of Bedouins, who are scatter'd thro' Syria, Egypt, and

all the coast of Africa) are the posterity of Cush, as they came from that province, which still bears the name of Chuzistan, and is situated on the Persian gulf, towards the mouth of the river Euphrates.

It seems to be a little incredible, that these three nations, something different indeed in their manners and origin, should dwell so many ages in one country, which tho' very large, was much the same, without being confounded and blended together: either first, by their being oblig'd to live pretty nearly after the same manner, or else, by their consequent alliances, which they must necessarily contract one with another. Perhaps this occasion'd the fancy, common to all the Arabians, of writing and stiling themselves the children of Abraham; in which opinion they strengthen themselves by the help of genealogies, either real or imaginary, preserv'd with the utmost care, in every family, as a title absolutely necessary for themselves and their posterity. But they agree that their first ancestors were not so exact and regular in this respect, as they are now, and have been for above three thousand five hundred years; and they confess that it was in the time of Adnan, the eighth from Ismael, that the registering of descents was establish'd as a law and necessary practice: but before that time they have nothing certain. This Adnan is reckon'd among the ancestors of Mahomet; so that even his genealogy higher than Adnan, is as uncertain as that of any other Arabian. Indeed, it is very plain, that a small people separated from the rest of the world, as well by their situation as by their particular way of living, may preserve

preserve accounts of the course of their generations, with more certainty, than other greater nations, who, tho' they may have distinctions of names and families, yet by means of foreign wars and invasions, and an infinite number of various distractions and occupations, are very liable to forget and misreckon their ancestry. This is seen among ourselves, as well as by the example of the Jews, whose genealogies were never confounded and forgotten till after their dispersion, when they were compell'd to live among other people.

But to return to the geographical description of Arabia, it must be said, that the antients had a very imperfect knowledge thereof, and the strange terrible notion that the christians of the middle age conceiv'd of Mahometans, Arabians, or Saracens, having constantly interrupted all national intercourse, which might have furnish'd them with an opportunity of discovering that country, or at least, of informing themselves of the particular accounts relating thereto; by this means, it is but of late times that we have learnt, that the Arabians are distinguish'd among themselves, not by arbitrary divisions into provinces and jurisdictions, but by their different professions, which obliges some to live always in the deserts, and in tents, employ'd perpetually in seeking pasture for their flocks, and water for their own necessary use, and never finding them but with the utmost pains and exceeding difficulty: while others assemble themselves together in cities, towns, and houses at a great distance from one another, to cultivate some barren territory, and reap from the ungrateful soil slender crops for a bare subsistence: all of them, in

other respects, living in an independency, which alone constituted all their happiness, having no communication with foreigners, whom they despis'd, and void of all desire of knowing what pass'd in any other part of the world. It must be confess'd, however, that this independance, so highly valu'd by the antient Arabians, continues no longer with the Musulmen, such as it was among their fore-fathers; as well from the necessity of the thing, where the Bedouins are subjected to certain chiefs, who head them in a sort of war that they practise upon caravans and other travellers, as because Mahometanism has accusom'd them to live in cities, and cultivated places, under the government of certain hereditary magistrates, call'd Emirs or Sharifs; who hold the rank of governours at first conferr'd upon them by the successors of Mahomet.

Again, it may be very properly observed, that the fatal desire of private convenience, which soon degenerates into luxury, has found the way into these prodigious deserts. The lust of wealth has triumph'd over the love of liberty; insomuch that they now suffer even the Europeans to enter into their country, and actually carry on there a traffick for coffee, by coming through the Red-Sea to the celebrated port of Mocha; while on the other hand, many of these Arabians themselves, hurry'd on by the desire of riches, carry that commodity into the ports of the Levant, in order to bring home money for it, of which, at length, they will make the same wise use as we do, and, like us, to the irreparable loss of that inestimable liberty, whose price is far above gold, and every other transitory pleasure.

'Tis then to the Arabians themselves we owe the confirmation of the true divisions of their country, of which Abul-fedā, Rāssiredin, and Ulugh-bek, have given us some notion; namely, that the Peninsula, beginning at Ailah, or at Colsum on the Red-Sea, on one side; and at Belfora upon the Persian gulf, on the other; and ending at the Indian ocean; is divided into five great provinces or territories, which derive their name from the nature of the country. Tahamah, or the great desert, is so called, because the ground is low there, in comparison of the rest of the country. Here are neither cities nor towns, but indeed some places distinguish'd by the waters and palm-trees that are met with there. Such is Odail, a celebrated place in the road from Coufah to Mecca, whose name signifies "An assemblage of waters in the desert." This province takes up all the northern part of the Peninsula stretching towards the gulf of Persia unto Eleahf.

The second division is called Naged, to intimate a raised country, because they ascend thither from the desert, and beginning at the great mountain call'd Alhareb, it possesses the southern part. This territory, towards the South, borders upon Yaman, or Arabia the Happy; towards the East, upon the South-east side of the Hagias; towards the West upon Barheim; and towards the North, upon the canal of Eleahf. Within this compass, there are a great many deserts, and scarce any water to be found, by reason of the elevation of the country. Nevertheless, some people dwell there, in those parts where the mountains afford a shelter, and most of these places

places are renowned in the Mahometan history for some remarkable events.

The Hagias, which is the third division, ever since the times of Mahomet, has been, and is, the most considerable part of Arabia with respect to the number of the inhabitants it contains, tho', generally speaking, the land is nothing but sands and rocks: and besides, it was the seat of an empire and religion, which made it considerable in the eyes of the universal world. It is subdivided into four parts, of which there is only one, that does not abutt upon the Red-Sea; namely, 1st, Jamamah, which stretching into the desert is bounded on the North, and to the East, by Tahamah; and on the South and South-east, by Naged. This province takes its name from the principal place in it. Water is very scarce here too, and it hardly contains any thing else but parch'd plains cover'd with sand. 2d, Hague, is the most northern part of the Hagias, and contains precisely that extent of land which the antients call'd Madian, or Arabia the Stony. This is the country whither Agar the mother of Ismael led her son, when he was oblig'd to quit the house of Abraham his father. And here he afterwards settled; marrying a daughter of Madad, of the tribe of the Jordahmites; so that this country was first divided among his descendants. It was hither, likewise, that Moses the deliverer of the Hebrews, retreated, when he fled from Ægypt upon his having slain an Ægyptian; he marry'd here, the daughter of Jethro, a powerful man of this province, whom the Arabians pretend to have been a great prophet, and the teacher of his son-in-law. Finally, it is here, that the mountains of Sinai and Horeb are
situated;

situated; so that this is the spot of ground, where it pleas'd the Almighty to manifest himself with extraordinary pomp and glory. And the Mahometans still consider it, as a place, which exhibits the most evident marks of the Divine Justice and Vengeance. They tell us, that it being at first inhabited by two tribes of Arabians descended from Shem by Aram (which were the Adites, and the Thamodites,) they had the impiety to mock at the instructions and remonstrances of the prophet Saleh, whereupon they sadly experienc'd the terrible wrath of the Most High, which manifested itself in the total destruction of both those tribes: "of which dreadful judgment, " the frightful rocks and caverns that fill this land, " remain the ever-during monuments unto all eternity," says Mahomet, in his Alcoran, without any farther explanation of the story. The chief city of this province heretofore distinguish'd by the name of Pedra Deserta is now call'd Hagr. Here are also Hilah and Colsum, the last of which gives name to the Red-Sea, among the modern Arabians, but they no longer know that of Paran, once so considerable, that the Holy Scripture accommodating itself to the language of the vulgar, often bestows its name upon mount Sinai at the foot of which it was built upon the sea-shore. 3d, Hagias, properly so called, which possesses the middle part of this division, and includes the famous cities of Mecca and Medina, the seats of the empire and the religion of the first Mahometans. But it cannot be affirm'd, that they were purposely chosen for the sake of the beauty and fertility of the place, which abounds with nothing but steril rocks and thirsty plains; all their
water

water being tinctured with a mineral salt, which covers the face of the ground; and if some palm-trees grow there, 'tis because the people, being more numerous than in other parts of Arabia, propagate, cultivate and preserve them with abundance of care. If we ask what should draw hither so great a concourse of inhabitants? it would be difficult to assign any other reason for it, than the rooted persuasion which has obtained there for about four thousand years, that Mecca was the principal habitation of the prophet Ismael, during his life, and the sacred repository of his remains: that the temple in that city has been most highly honour'd from the creation of the world, being destined from all eternity for the place of benediction, and more particularly consecrated by Abraham, who built here that holy house, towards which the prayers of the faithful are always directed from the remotest parts of the whole earth: that the well in the outward court of that hallow'd structure, is the very fountain that the Angel shew'd Agar, the mother of Ismael, to the saving the life of her son: in a word, they esteem it a country preferr'd in the election of GOD above all others, for this eminent reason, because the last and most exalted of all prophets, was to be born there, and from thence to declare to mankind the undoubted way to salvation.

These are the august titles that have rais'd such a veneration for that country in the minds of the people; insomuch, that the most renown'd of all the Arabians come hither to dwell, or, at least, to die there. It should seem that Moses himself has particularly

ticularly mention'd this place, in his description of Arabia, for he speaks of the city of Mesh or Meshah, whose situation much better corresponds to that of Mecca, than the port of Mocha which lies at the extremity of the Red-Sea, and with respect of which, the mountains of Sephara bear rather North-east than directly to the East. Furthermore, Hagias was the chief theatre of the actions of Mahomet, and his principal successors: a most important motive to attract people, whose piety was more addicted to what was carnal and sensible in religion, than to any thing pure and spiritual. The fourth and last division of the Hagias bears likewise the name of Tahamah, to signify its being a low region; situated between the sea and the mountain. Here are the cities of Tayif, Serrain, and Haly, whose adjacent parts are cultivated. But we must observe with respect to the mountain which bounds this last district, that upon the spot, it bears the name of Gasswan, which signifies the Great Mountain; and yet it is but a branch of that, which Moses calls Sephara, and the Arabians, Alhareb: which fills the middle of the Peninsula, and is the cause of all the fertility ascrib'd to Arabia the Happy.

The fourth part of Arabia is called Orude, extending from Jamamah and Naged, unto Eleahf and Bahrein upon the gulf of Persia, and so on to the land of Oman. All the water and palm-trees within this large province are precious goods, whose property is always in common, because every body should have water, that affords a general refreshment, and dates, which grow by these currents of
water.

water. The inhabitants of the country of Orude are strangers to convenience and elegance, tho' they find gold dust in many places, and their shores are renowned for the pearl fishery.

The fifth and last division of the whole Peninsula, is the Yaman, or Arabia the Happy. This, as it is the largest of all, so is it likewise the most fertile, and the most improv'd. Its bounds are, to the North, the Naged, and that part of the Hagias called Tahamah; to the East, the country of Orude, and the land of Oman; to the South, the Indian ocean; and to the West, the Streights of Babel-mandel, with part of the Red-Sea. This province has been for a very long time, as we have before said, impenetrable to foreigners, and consequently unknown: 'tis only since the voyages made to Mocha for coffee, that we have been absolutely certain that the middle of it consists of mountains, which supply the inhabitants with plenty of wholesome waters, and afford them verdant shades, and a territory that being manured, rewards well the toil of the husbandman. But we are also certify'd at the same time, that the plains towards the sea-side are cover'd with sand, and with a mineral salt, which consequently spoils there all the water. Nevertheless, several cities are to be found here, that have kept up a trade ever since they were built. Such are Mascata, Jartack, and Aden, upon the Indian ocean; all three of them formerly capitals; but only Jartack remains so now. Mocha and Gezora, upon the Red-Sea, carry on the traffick with Egypt, as well as Jodda, which is properly the port of Mecca.

Mecca. These places, Mocha, and Gezora, as likewise Adan, and Mascata, are at this day subjected to the king of Yaman, who resides at Dhamar, in a mountain where he has fortify'd two other places, Morab, and Tagha, the former to lay up his treasures in, and the other for the safe custody of his prisoners of state. In this province also, is Sanaa, once the capital of Yaman, and the rival of Mecca; Sadaa, and Nageran, seated on the top of the mountain; with Betel, Fagny, Zibit, Rediah, Irama, Taphar, Gabala, and divers other cities, which we meet with either in the plain, or upon the mountain. What must needs surprise us is to learn from the accounts now given us of this country, that all those treasures of spices, gold, and precious things, which Arabia the Happy heretofore possess'd, are all vanished, to make room for a new production, absolutely unknown to the antients, namely their coffee, which brings now, into Arabia, more money, than their incense, pearls, and gold-dust, ever acquired in former ages, notwithstanding their wonderful estimation.

This is the present condition of all Arabia, and the most exact division thereof, according to the latest accounts that we have received from the most learned Arabian geographers, in the memoirs they have left of it. We might be even more exact in this division, were we to trace the habitations of the first tribes of the Arabians, and those of the immediate descendants from Abraham, whose very names are for the most part still preserved in this country, notwithstanding the prodigious interval of time that has roll'd between that age and ours.

But

But as those particulars would not be of any great service to the history we are writing, it shall suffice just to observe, that the names of the countries of Boulan, Hadramant, Sheba, Disklam, Uzal, Jarac of the Sabæans, and Dedan, called by corruption Adan, still subsist in Arabia the Happy, to confirm the testimony of Moses above four thousand years ago; and yielding an authentick proof of the truth of the rest of the settlements recorded by Moses in his book of Genesis, upon which some commentators do not seem to rely, with a confidence equal to its merit.

After these few geographical notes upon the situation and division of Arabia, 'tis proper to say something of the particular character of the people that dwell there. With regard to which, it may be first observ'd that as the body of the nation sprung from Joktan, who was the younger brother of Heber, the father of the Hebrews; and as this relation was again renewed by the colonies that Ishmael, and the other sons of Abraham by his second wife, led into Arabia, it is not much to be wonder'd at, that we should find a great conformity between the Jews and the Arabians, as well in their particular customs, as in their language and government. As to their customs, we know that the first Hebrews, having forsaken the cities where Nahor and Terah had formerly dwelt, took up in the person of Abraham the practice of the wandering life, which was continued by Isaac and his children to the time of Jacob's going down into Egypt. During this space, which was upwards of two hundred years, the Patriarchs

triarchs lived in tents, after the manner of the Arabians ; they minded neither sowing nor reaping ; but consider'd their families and their cattle as their only wealth, which was more or less considerable in proportion to the convenience of pasture, and abundance of water, they enjoy'd. 'Twas in these deserts they dug those wells, the property whereof was afterwards disputed between them and their neighbours, as a possession of the utmost importance. 'Tis observable also, that as the children of Joktan parted the country they peopled among themselves, and were divided into tribes or distinct families ; so Ismael, in like manner, when he was become master of Madian, and perhaps of Hagias, divided his posterity into twelve tribes according to the number of the children he had gotten, as well by the Egyptian woman that his mother caused him to marry, as by the daughter of Madad the Jordahmite. The same custom was observed by Esau in his division of Idumea, by Jacob also in the disposition of his last testament, and by his posterity after their deliverance out of Egypt. We see likewise that the Arabians and the Israelites, both the one and the other, had espoused the same religious principle, of finding some fault with those whom they had a mind to divest of their lands, in order to possess them themselves. Thus Mahomet himself relates in his Alcoran, that several nations, who inhabited Arabia before the children of Joktan, were exterminated by a divine judgment. But instead of giving some far-fetch'd reason for it, such as the curse upon Ham denounced by Noah, he tells us, that this punishment

ment befel them, because they would not believe the truth and unity of God, as the prophets Heber and Saleth had taught them. 'Twas from such another religious motive that the Hebrews believed themselves called to conquer Palestine, of a part of which they really possess'd themselves; but unhappily for them, the Lord did not so entirely root out the anti-ent inhabitants, but that there were enow left to become very troublesome to them in the sequel.

After the conquest of the land of Promise, and the division thereof among the tribes of Israel, an exact and compleat correspondence appears between the government of the Hebrews, and that of the Arabians: the exclusion of kings, or absolute chiefs, capable of suppressing the liberty of others: the paternal power of the heads of families, who ruled within themselves, independent one of another: common councils either of particular tribes, or of all of them together, according to the necessary requirements of the affairs of the publick: and a common persuasion, that equally prevail'd in both nations, that GOD graciously afforded to them a particular protection, for the sake of their fathers, the favourites of Heaven. In consequence of which, they believ'd that the Supreme Being supported their governments, protected them against all their enemies, and in particular instances conducted them by the ministry of his prophets, reclaiming them to the true knowledge of GOD, or altering the course of nature, and by miracles procuring them unexpected victories, and other prodigious advantages over their adversaries. Ismael, the first born son of Abraham, miraculously sustain'd in the wilderness, warned by
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an angel, and providentially preserv'd from all the perils to which he was expos'd thro' the whole course of his life, was ever careful not to forget or neglect that divine worship, which his great father had so faithfully maintain'd, and which deriv'd upon himself a protection, altogether miraculous. Him, the Arabians acknowledge, the first restorer of that simple and natural religion, which, tho' within the compass of every man's capacity, is still deform'd by their passions. The very same superstitious fancies that oppos'd religion in its purity and simplicity, ceas'd not to pollute it after that Patriarch's death, in spite of all the efforts of succeeding prophets. In-
somuch, that there was a necessity, say the Musulmen, that GOD should raise up Mahomet, in the fullness of time, to re-establish a pure worship, proceeding from GOD himself, first in Arabia, and afterwards in a great part of the world, under the title of Islam, or Islamism; a name most probably deriv'd from that of Ismael.

The Israelites, on their side, boast likewise of their fathers as eminent teachers and divine prophets, with this difference, that they having fallen into a tedious slavery, and forgotten for many generations the covenant of the Lord; 'twas necessary GOD should raise them up a new prophet, invested with omnipotence, to deliver them from the yoke of Egyptian bondage, to lead them dry-shod through the Red-Sea, and conduct them for forty years in the deserts where their incredulity kept them; from whence they went into the promis'd land, and liv'd there under the government of judges, who were inspir'd men, that
succeeded

succeeded one another at different times, until the establishment of the kingly dignity.

All this while, the Arabians, with more tranquillity, enjoy'd the truth, and the continuance of the same supernatural gift of prophecy, tho' in a very different manner from the Jews: for among the latter, it was commonly bestow'd upon persons who least expected it; whereas with the Arabians it seemed to be the reward of a modest retir'd life, spent in meditation. Such among them were Schoaib, better known to us by the name of Jethro; and Balaam the son of Beor: who, not only declared the destiny of the Israelites, and of other great monarchies, but also predicted the coming of the Messias, and the appearance of a new star which should distinguish his nativity. In the mean time, as the Hebrews descended from Jacob are called, by way of preference above all the children of Abraham, the chosen people, the depositaries of the promises, the guardians of the true faith, the law, the ark, the temple, and the ephod; in short, that the Messias himself was to be of their blood, and to spring from their race, it must be granted, with respect to the cœlestial favours the Arabians were honoured with, that they were absolutely inferiour to the Israelites in the gifts of grace; but in return it must also be said, that the Arabians were altogether their superiours, in the gifts of nature, and the accomplishments of humanity.

The Hebrews, inclosed within a little corner of the world, whose extraordinary fertility supply'd all their wants; to whom, that land was endear'd both by its plenty, and by the persuasion they had, that it

was

was given unto them, by the destiny of an eternal decree; but, at the same time, destitute of navigation and commerce, unskilled in any arts or sciences, without politeness, or any other manners than what were prescribed them by their law, the restriction and particularity whereof necessarily separated them from the rest of the world, and drew upon them, the hatred and scorn of all other people; these Hebrews, I say, living, moreover, without chiefs, without politicks, and equally ignorant of the means either of cultivating peace, or carrying on a war, never determining upon any thing, but either by lot, or by consulting the oracle, whose interpretation was a mystery depending upon the instrumentality of their priests, seem indeed, to be truly preserved by a meer miracle, of which we are all witnesses at this day. The Arabians, on the contrary, were separated from the rest of the world, less by choice, than by the necessary consequence of the situation of their abode. They were cut off from the society of their fellow creatures, by the impossibility of holding any communication with them. But this particularity has neither contracted their knowledge nor their understanding: they have studied in every age, the most noble and exalted sciences; a great and worthy progress have they made in them, unassisted with the discoveries of other nations; and their own study and application has furnished them with what others purchase from derived experience. Yet, addicted as they are to the sublimer arts, they have not neglected those of more common use. They have enriched their language with the most delicate beauties, and

adorned it with the utmost perfection of eloquence and poesy; having always enjoy'd the finest taste, and a marvellous talent of striking out the most lively and ingenious thoughts, and expressing them, either in verse or prose, in chosen terms whose exactness and aptitude are equally exquisite, and accompany'd with such an unexampled dignity, that their eloquence is of a quite different species from that of every other nation: and yet this astonishing faculty is not among them, the effect of study, but the result of a plain education, which they receive in their own families under the tutorage of their elders, who only copy from the fathers that politeness, which they infuse into the children.

The natural constitution of the Arabians, is extremely stout and robust. They are scarce liable to the infirmities of other men: the sobriety and labour to which they are accustomed from their infancy, together with the purity of the air they breathe, and the heat of the climate, which constantly keeps up a proper perspiration, maintains their health to an extreme old age. In consequence of this disposition of body, their judgment is commonly sound, elegant, and exact, and as they have not much passion, so it is very rarely roused. They are grave and melancholy, without any fits of frolick or ill-humour: and the simplicity of their manners is equally removed from meanness and pride. We find in them a humanity mingled with a becoming stateliness, which is to be ascribed to the solidity of their sentiments. These prevailing qualities among the Arabians may spring from a dry and bilious temperament; which

is their common constitution; but I rather attribute them to that solitude in which they spend the greatest part of their life. For that accustoms them to the knowledge of themselves, to the making themselves worthy of their own esteem, and, if I may so speak, to feed themselves with their own imagination. I mention not their valour, which dwelling in deserts makes necessary to them in proportion to the perpetual danger they are in, of being devoured, them and their families, by the wild beasts.

The wide difference of our manners, in which luxury and wasting is the principal character, occasions our looking upon this vast solitude with terror; and the want of amusements there, as a sad blank that cuts off all the pleasure and satisfaction of life. But we should judge very wrong, concerning their sentiments, by reducing them to ours. They are thoroughly satisfied that next to liberty, this solitude is their chiefest happiness; that 'tis to this they owe the preservation of their temperance, and that disdain of riches and pleasure, which is greatly to be admired in their histories: that 'twas this help'd them to the happy mastery over their impetuous passions, that so often, with us, disturb the peace of society: that it assisted them no less to encrease their knowledge, which they extend, according to their particular genius, to the most difficult sciences. Indeed, it is not uncommon to meet with some among them, who, in the leisure of that solitude, have studied the language of the birds, so as to be acquainted with the signification of certain cries: an easy thing to believe in regard of a country where the shifting of objects is so very rare, that a bird

could not see from the height in the air where he flies, a company of horsemen in a distant plain, without uttering a cry upon that occasion, which a man who had applied himself to the study of this art, might easily observe and distinguish from another, formed upon any other different occurrence. The history of Hagiage is famous in this kind, and contains nothing improbable upon the foot of this explication, although we meet there with several very extraordinary circumstances. Nevertheless, I am far from concluding, from this history, that animals have really a language intelligible to men who have made it their study. All that I contend for is, that certain objects may excite in the beasts certain motions, or certain articulations, which a solitary and attentive man might so well observe, and make such use of that observation, as upon hearing the same cry he shall know what object it is that strikes the animal at that time. So it is that we distinguish, by the voice of a dog, what passion he is moved with, and almost the very object that is the cause of it.

These reflections upon the solitude of the Arabians will not yet direct our judgment how they come to be naturally so ingenious: for experience shews us, that commonly it produces among our Monks (who are the only people that practise it) nothing but stupidity, ignorance and sensuality; whereas with them, it is the principle of all their best qualities. They are neither bashful nor timorous, in consequence of their lonely life; neither are they less polished, or less dexterous in the arts of insinuation, and the conduct of their affairs, because they have but little conversation. On the contrary, accustomed always to be
entirely

entirely masters of themselves, immoderate joy or anger, lying or indiscretion, hardly ever appear in their practice. 'Tis observable also, that before the death of Mahomet, till ambition and avarice had corrupted them, they were so moderate, that in the midst of the immense treasures of the East, the conquerors who had made themselves masters of them, would only take what was just necessary to their subsistence, never proposing to themselves any other use of all those riches, than that of distributing them among such persons as they thought deserved them. For the ensuing history will inform us that the very first controversy that ever arose among the faithful Arabians was to determine, "whether, in the distribution of riches, it was as righteous to reward the virtuous, as to relieve the necessitous:" and we shall find that both sides of this question had illustrious defenders.

The Arabian nation, though solitary, spread into deserts, and unknown to other people, yet were never contemptible, as they still enjoy'd several natural advantages, and practis'd those virtues, which render'd them worthy of a kinder fortune. And yet when they issu'd from their profound retreats, and providence called them, in their turn, to govern the world, they betrayed several enormous vices; which roused against them all whom they did not immediately subdue, which rendered their name odious and detestable, as well as terrible; and which would not allow the least notice to be taken of their virtues. I do not speak of vices which may be imputed to the constitution of human nature: such as insolence in prosperity, the abuse of power, lust, faction and pride;

but I speak of that hardness of heart ascribed to them; the necessary result of their constitution, and of that solitary life to which they are accusom'd from their tender years. I speak of that barbarous scorn of all those things, which are the objects of other peoples affection and esteem; of that preference, without measure, and without bounds, which they bestow upon their own opinions and customs; of that inflexible cruelty which transported them to cut off from the earth one half of its inhabitants, and bereave the residue, of all that learning, which mankind had treasured up, by long and painful experience. This conduct, indeed, stirs up all our powers: we cannot understand how a people that could perpetrate these crimes, could be polite, rational, eloquent, and exquisite judges of beauty and delicacy; and we know not how to refer it to any other cause than that of an inveterate, blind, and ungovernable barbarity. However, they are not, according to their authors, altogether without excuse.

For besides that they intended, and actually performed no more, than what the people of GOD did, when they enter'd the land of promise, and in the war with the Amalekites; 'tis very plain, that the only proper method, to be taken by a new people, like the Arabians, (who knew nothing of other countries, but contemned their inhabitants, their effeminate manners, and their divided opinions, and justly suspected their perfidy) was to cause terror and dread to march before them, under the notion of a people fierce and savage, and absolutely void of mercy and pity. The opinion they had of war, was also very different from ours. They did not think it

was

was to be carried on with method, nor understood training their people. They resolved to conquer, subdue and persuade. The last, they regarded as the consequence of the two other, and for accomplishing the two former they knew nothing but violence and terrour. Accordingly, we find that their first leaders never offer'd any other conditions to the provinces they enter'd, than to embrace the same religion, and so become members of a true fraternity, or else to receive absolute Lords, to whom it was unlawful to suffer infidelity to escape, any longer, with impunity. If they refused to comply, war commenced, and they exerted the most proper means to bring it to a speedy issue, without keeping up the damage on both sides. So that 'tis evident, in this conduct of those wars, which were inevitable in the execution of the prodigious enterprize they had formed, the Arabians spared themselves no more than they spared others; distinguishing in general their contempt of life, and their abhorrence of those means too often employ'd in saving it, at the expence of duty and honour.

We ought not to confound under the same idea the sentiments we express by the terms, hardness of heart, or inflexible courage, and cruelty. The soft and lively passions so common in our climates, make much nearer approaches to cruelty, than that sort of hardness of heart or manly firmness, that makes us undervalue life, upon some particular occasions, and stop our ears against the moans, lamentations, and prayers of those who dread the loss of it. In fact, to how many barbarities have men been incited, in these Northern parts, by ambition, love, jealousy,

and politicks! With us, cruelty intermingles with the administration of justice. Whereas the Arabians, who were accusom'd to consider things coolly, and seldom took much care of their own lives, sacrificed the lives of others without any scruple or remorse to views and designs which they imagined were GOD's own scheme. But with that violence, they never mixt the mean thoughts of a base revenge, nor the long equipage and dreadful furniture of punishments, nor tortures, a thousand times more cruel than death, Things necessary perhaps for the sake of example, but which indicate, at least to distant spectators, a black principle much more blameable than meer hardness of heart.

Farther, 'tis easy to suppose, that the natural disposition of the Arabians to severity has been strengthen'd by the constitution of their government, which had always respect to the religion they establish'd by their conquests. For their whole oeconomy being founded upon a precise and blind obedience, supported by the belief of an inevitable destiny, without doubt they look'd upon pity as the greatest of all obstacles to the exactness of their civil and religious discipline. And indeed, from this fundamental principle of their doctrine, which affirms, that the obedience due to GOD is only conditional, and relative to human infirmity, but that which is due to princes is absolute, they have concluded that the commands of princes lay an indispensable obligation upon their subjects, and that disobedience is always an inexcusable and capital crime, unless it be supported by the success of rebellion. Now it follows from their own principles, that as none but GOD can unite fear and
love,

love, as a governor, supremely perfect, equally as gracious and merciful, as he is just and mighty; so princes have the advantage of enforcing obedience to their orders, in their utinost latitude, without comment, interpretation, or delay; and the people are made amends, with having the liberty to hate their tyrants, and to do themselves justice whenever their patience is spent. Thus the former are laid under a necessity of exercising a most rigorous and severe dominion, and the latter are thrown into a condition, very ready for changing at a venture the form of their slavery. So that their furious maxims for passive obedience, oppose and destroy themselves, from the impossibility of compelling nature.

It appears then as well from the constitutional bent of the Arabians, as from the principles of the religion they profess'd, and of the government they establish'd, that they could not listen to the tender voice of pity, without violating the authority of princes, the just defence of their subjects, and the continued customs of the people, for thirty or forty ages. But still it must be said, that if that hardness with which we reproach them, was inflexible to the tears of the unhappy, or the criminal, they were seldom so to the expressions of true generosity. Witness the history of the invincible Hagiage, before cited, who, having taken some rebels, sword in hand, and condemned them to death, without mercy; was surprized, to hear one of them cry out, at the very point of death, "There is none but GOD is just, because he only knows every thing." And being asked the reason of this moral reflection, which render'd him suspected of some other crime, or that

he knew more than his fellow-criminals; he answer'd,
 " I should not die, if Hagiage knew how I defended
 " his reputation yesterday, at the hazard of my life,
 " against the captain of this unhappy company."
 Hagiage being present, and not known personally to
 this Arabian, asked him if there was any witness of
 what he said? The next to him, reply'd, " I was
 " there." Whereupon Hagiage, suspecting imme-
 diately a contrivance between these two men to save
 their lives, asked the last, whether, as t'other's com-
 rade, he had not taken his part. But the Arabian
 reply'd gravely, " I could not do it; for I took up
 " arms against you, because I believed all the evil
 " that I had heard of you." This sentiment soften'd
 Hagiage, who would not have melted with prayers
 and entreaties. He gave them both their lives, de-
 siring of the first, the continuation of the opinion he
 had entertained of him, without being acquainted
 with him; and of the other, his esteem, which he
 promised to deserve, by an impartial administration of
 justice.

Such then, was the species of severity and firmness,
 practis'd by the first Arabians; not cruel, and divested
 of all generosity and humanity, but judicious, and
 regulated by the consideration of justice, and the
 publick security; which they preferr'd above every
 thing: being persuaded that a concern, nay a sigh
 for life, merited not the attention of a captain,
 otherwise than to condemn it as an offence contrary
 to the resignation due to the decree and will of
 GOD.

But

But we reproach them farther, and doubtless more reasonably, with the ignorance into which they plunged the world by the destruction of libraries, and monuments consecrated to the memory of the great actions of former heroes. Indeed, we cannot think, without grief and anger at their barbarity, upon the fatal burning of the famous Alexandrian library; collected through so many ages by curious and mighty kings; and augmented from time to time by the most learned among men: so that it contained the universal treasure of all the history of the world, all the opinions of philosophers, all the searches into nature, and all the learning and arts that mankind had been able to improve by their study and experience. A conflagration, not to be imputed to the heat of action, nor to a soldier's revenge for the fatigues of a tedious siege, nor yet to the rigour of a general, but meerly to the caprice of old Omar, the second Caliph, who after the capture of the city, being consulted about what he would be pleas'd to order to be done with such a prodigious heap of books, reply'd, "they must all be burnt, because the AL-CORAN is to take place of all other books." In short, this accursed order was executed, and those books, collected with so much care and cost, had the fate to heat the baths of the city for the space of eight months. An irreparable loss! and more to be lamented by mankind, than all the seas of blood, shed at different times by all the Barbarians together. I know nothing to urge in their behalf to wipe off this just reproach, unless we should say, that the crime and weakness of their old emperor is not to be imputed to the whole nation; and the less,

as they have since manifested as much, nay a greater ardour for the sciences than even the Greeks and Romans themselves. We actually see that the Arabians have taken care to translate into their language a great number of antient books, that are now lost, their translations supplying the place of the originals. Indeed their choice is not according to our relih, they have neglected history, polite-writings, natural, experimental, and even moral philosophy, and have fix'd upon physick and mathematicks, agreeable to a sort of taste that is peculiarly their own. But enough of the characters and manners of the Arabians : return we now to the description of their country, or rather let us add to that already given, all that we have learnt, from the latest accounts, of those celebrated cities of Mecca and Medina where Mahomet was born, and died, and lies intombed.

Mecca is situated in sixty three degrees of longitude, and twenty three degrees of North latitude; it stands upon the river Chaibar, twenty leagues from the mouth of it, and is without dispute the most antient and illustrious city of Arabia; for both before and since the times of Mahomet it has been equally regarded as a place of great sanctity, and the seat of an everlasting worship; and besides has long been the largest and most populous of any in this country. Its antiquity is certainly very great, exclusive of all that the Arabians have invented beyond the truth. 'Tis even probable it is that which Moses speaks of by the name of Mesh or Mesha, whose situation he fixes with respect to the great mountain called Sephara. At least 'tis certain it was of great repute in the time of Moad

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the son of Adnan, the twentieth grandfather of Mahomet. The most antient authors have mentioned the square house, called KAABA, which was the place for religious assemblies, for sacrifices, and prayer, to all the Arabians. They attribute the building thereof to Abraham and Ismael, with this circumstance, that their assemblies were before held near a little mountain of red sand, which has since been removed ; so that the antiquity and renown of this place is absolutely incontestable ; tho' we cannot say that the worship of the one GOD has been invariable continued there ; since the antient Arabians often prophaned it, by setting up several idols, which Mahomet demolished, as we shall see in the sequel.

The city of Mecca stands in a soil composed of flints and small rocks, which are scatter'd through all the country. The city it self is uneven, the North side lying much higher than the South. It's length is about two thousand great paces, and its breadth a thousand. The mountains that enclose it are, to the East, tha. called Abukabis, which seems a branch of that of Arafat, of which we shall speak immediately ; that of Kaicoam lies to the West, and the road that crosses it leads to Jodda, a city upon the coast of the Red-Sea which is properly the port and magazine of Mecca, for corn, linnen, and other commodities which they are obliged to have from Egypt. Their distance is three large days journey for the ordinary caravans, which generally is thirty common leagues.

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The mountain of Thaur, which lies to the South of Mecca, rises so near it, as to command the city, in such a manner, that every thing may be seen from thence, that passes in the holy place. In this mountain is that celebrated cave whither Mahomet retreated with only his father-in-law Abubeker when he was forced to abandon the city, by a flight, whose date, gave to the Mahometans an Epocha, which they call the Hegira. To the North, is the Mountain of Kara, but about three leagues off from the city; near this they have raised a castle, which is the residence of the Sharif or prince of the country. Here also is another cave, to which the prophet retired in his youth, in order to sequester himself from the world, and entertain himself with those notions which he had already conceived of religion, tho' he had not, as yet, received his special call. All these mountains are only so many naked rocks, where nothing grows but brambles, and which reflect a scorching heat upon the city they encompass. But that which makes living here, still more irksome and inconvenient, is the want of water. For though many Caliphs have undertaken to bring it thither from distant places, those works have never yet been compleated. So that they are obliged to be contented there with bad well-water, which is salt, or at least, tingured with the quality of the soil. Nevertheless, they are recompensed for this privation by a rich abundance of every thing else necessary to life, or even to luxury; and which never fails them, in consequence of a divine promise formerly made by
God

God to Abraham, the perpetual accomplishment whereof the Musulmen reckon among the proofs of the special election of this city and temple. Indeed, we cannot sufficiently admire, that such a prodigious number of pilgrims as go thither every year from all the countries that profess the Mahometan religion, which is, at least, half the continent, should never famish a city seated in the middle of a frightful desert, but on the contrary, be the occasion of a never-failing plenty. Egypt and the Indies have emulated each other in supplying it with corn, rice, linnen, and poultry: Africa brings it gold, and Yaman, or rather the great mountain called Gaswan, Alhareb, or Alaschal (according to certain distinctions usual in the country) affords it, though at the distance of eight days journey, coffee, dates both new and dried, raisins, cattle, oil, snow, and a great many other commodities.

This city is divided into two parts; that to the North, which lies highest is called Bekka in the Alcoran, because of the multitude of its inhabitants; and the other, which sinks lower, is named Haram, with respect to the sanctification of the temple which it surrounds, and of the privilege of refuge that it has always enjoyed; and which has never been violated but by the impious, whose punishment is still memorable, and enroll'd in the number of miraculous proofs of the divine election of the place where the temple is built.

'Tis to the inquisitive diligence of a Swedish ecclesiastick, who travel'd a great while in Egypt, that we are obliged for the particular description of

this famous temple, to which no Christian ever approach'd. It was published, some years ago, by the famous Reland, with a plan of it, and afterwards translated into French. From hence we learn, that in the southern part of the city, and near the foot of the mountain, there is a considerable space enclosed with piazzas, which on the outside, seem to be only plain walls, without any ornament, and of the height of fifteen or twenty feet. This wall is of white marble, the stones are cut square, are all equal, and each side of them is two cubits. The thickness of the wall is formed by two of these stones, so that it is four cubits wide. The marble is polished on the inside of the piazza, and is left rough without, as well in the whole structure of the wall as in the entablature, which is nothing but a quarter of a circle of about a cubit and an half in thickness, upon which are set gilded cupoloes, which rising from the top of that wall cover the whole extent of the piazzas within. The space enclosed by this wall is a perfect square, of about eighty fathom every way : each side within, measuring exactly but seventy five fathom. At each angle of the outward square there is raised an edifice in the form of a turret, adorned with three balconies at different heights, to which they ascend by stairs within side. The use of these turrets is to call the people to prayers, day and night, at the hours appointed.

From the top of these turrets there rises a spire of about two hundred foot high, which is gilt at the point, and is crown'd with a crescent, which looks like our vanas. The balconies are every night beautified with a great many glass lamps, which
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They light up, for a sort of ornament, and in consideration of the pilgrims that may arrive in the night. Between each of these turrets, and in the midst of each side of the outward wall, is a square bason cased with marble, of twelve fathom in circumference, and of the depth of several feet; which holds water for the legal purifications, necessary to precede the several prayers of the Musulmen. The water is brought from a great way off, by an aqueduct built by Caliph Moktadar the eighteen emperor of the race of the Abassides; which, after all, only comes from a reservoir in the mountain of Gasswan, that is fed by the melting of the snow, so that it is not fit to drink: but as 'tis reputed running water, it serves for the frequent ablutions which every Musulman is obliged to. Each side of the wall has three gates, built arch-wise, that lead directly into the piazza; one of them is exactly in the middle, and the two others at the ends, near each turret. Their doors are of brass, of an immense weight, without any other ornament than a foliage of different sorts, according to which the several gates are denominated. They are open'd and shut at stated hours; but they never fail to leave four of them always open, towards the four quarters of the world, that there may be no time wherein sinners of all countries may not come into the universal sanctuary, or (as they call it) the bosom of mercy. Upon entering under the piazza, an hollow space immediately salutes the sight, whose area is one thousand two hundred fathom, into which they descend by sixteen great steps of marble, which reach the whole length of each portico, and round about the whole space. The steps are very low, to make the descent easy,

eafy, and to prevent accidents which inattention, or the enthufiafm of people transported with devotion, might occafion.

In the middle of this fpace, an edifice meets the eye of a very peculiar ftructure ; it is a fquare building, whofe height fomewhat exceeds its length and breadth ; there is nothing to be feen but a black fuff which covers the walls entirely to the platform, which is of gold, fpread out like the top of a table, and receives the rain, which falls very feldom in that country. This is that celebrated edifice, of more value than all the ftately domes raifed by the greateft architects with infinite labour and expence, the humble houfe of Abraham, the friend of GOD, built in his perfecutions, when being a pilgrim, and a wanderer on the earth, GOD revealed to him that he had chofen this place from all eternity, there to beftow his heavenly benediction, and to receive the vows and prayers of thofe, who, paying homage to his power and the verity of his Being, ask of him the things that are neceffary for their everlafting happinefs. This very houfe Ifmael received from his father as his inheritance, and the portion of his firft-born fon ; in which he dwelt 'till he died, and near to which he fleeps 'till the refurrection ; as witnefs his fepulchre, which is ftill feen here, without any alteration through fo many ages. In fhort, this is that holy houfe diftinguifh'd by the name of KAABA, or the fquare houfe, towards which not only the Arabians addrefs their moft ardent vows, but towards which all the nations of the world, that recognize the verity and unity of GOD, turn their face when they

they pray, directing their intention hither, in consequence of the eternal choice of the divinity. For the rest, this KAABA is only built with the stones of the country, heap'd up and bound together with a simple mortar of red earth, which is grown hard by time. It is placed exactly respecting the four cardinal points of the globe. Its height is twenty four cubits, exclusive of the breastwork that runs around the terrass : its length north and south is likewise twenty four cubits, but its breadth from east to west is but twenty three ; reckoning the cubit at the rate of four to the height of a common man. The terrass of flat stones which forms the roof of this house has been overlaid with gold : they have added a water-spout of the same metal, which throws off the rain towards the north precisely upon the stone that covers the tomb of Ismael. The breast-work that encompasses the terrass, to the height of three cubits, is also of massy gold, which it self would prodigiously overload a wall less solid than this.

On the east-side of this house there is an opening in the form of a gate, and this is the only place that admits the light from without. This entrance is placed at some distance from the middle, and exactly three cubits from the south-east angle. It does not come down to the ground by four or five cubits : so that one would imagine there was a hollow space under the whole flooring, if it was not more natural to think it must be supported by something altogether solid : this is agreeable to the notion of the antients, in their way of building, who always raised the floor, a great height from the level of the earth, in order
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to render their habitations more wholesom. This gate is closed with folding doors of massy gold, hung upon golden hinges, with fastenings of the same metal. But the threshold is one entire natural stone, upon which all the pilgrims bow down their foreheads, and then kiss it with the profoundest veneration. Even the monarchs of the East pay'd this homage unto it, and zealously discharged all the duties of the common pilgrims, before they brought up the custom of acquitting themselves of this pilgrimage by commission. Haron the severe, who lived in the time of Charlemaine, was the last of the caliphs that performed it in person : though even he had accomplish'd it eight times in the course of his life. Nevertheless several other great princes have fulfilled it since that time, among whom they principally reckon Bajazet the second emperor of the Turks, who received the news of the death of his father Mahomet the second, when he was actually upon his journey, for that purpose, in the year of our Lord 1483. The door of the Kaaba is seldom open'd, there being nothing in particular within that room to encrease the devotion of the pilgrims. Indeed, nothing strikes the sight there but the most precious of all metals; the cieling above, the floor beneath, and the sides of all the walls, are intirely overlaid with gold. The Arabians have formerly erected idols in this holy place : but from the time that Mahomet drove them thence, no profanation, that war or civil discord has at any time introduced into the temple of Mecca, has ever arrived at that pitch, as to commit the like outrage upon the sanctity of this hallow'd house.

As to the outside of this edifice, it is hid from the eyes of the people by the hangings of black silk that wholly cover it. These are made new every year, at their feast of Bairan, which is the Easter of the Musulmen: and the greatest princes of that religion defray the expence thereof, in their turns. Just above these black hangings, appears the golden balustrade that runs all around the terrass, more advantageously to strike the eyes of the beholders. And about six feet below that balustrade, they have set upon the black covering, a gorgeous fillet of golden tissue, which surrounds the whole building, and exalts the magnificence of all, by its prodigious richness and grandeur. It must not be here omitted, that this black veil suggested to Mahomet the thought of changing the colour of his standards, which were white, before his taking the city of Mecca. 'Tis also in imitation of this veil of the holy house, that the caliphs, successors of Mahomet, lined the principal passage into their palace with the same sort of stuff; which was hung also from the top of the house to the bottom, and cover'd the threshold of the door; whereon all the faithful, even kings themselves, were obliged to bow down, and touch it with their foreheads, before they were admitted to the sacred person of the caliph.

As to other circumstances attending this house, Reland's description informs us, that it is encompass'd round with a very narrow pavement of marble, and that towards the south-east angle, near the southern wall, without the enclosure of the pavement, there is placed a very great stone, which seems to be a rough piece of black marble, neither polished nor cut,
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which they stile absolutely, the Holy Stone, in Arabick, Brachtan, a word that signifies to be white, to shine, to glitter: and they suppose, that the sins of mankind are the only cause of its having lost its original lustre. 'Tis highly probable, that it is the remains of some antient idol, preserved by the superstition of the first Arabians; and this the rather, at 'tis proved by numberless authorities, both sacred and prophane, that there were some unshaped idols, that represented no particular figure. Some believe that this might have been consecrated to Saturn, who was called the God Remphan, and worship'd because they thought him the author of mischief. Others will have it to have been the idol of Venus, who has always been one of the principal divinities of the East: not her, whom the Greeks adored, and the Latins after them; but that glorious glittering star, which precedes and follows the Sun, and to which we have given the name of Venus. But however that may be, Mahomet, when he demolished the idols that polluted the sacred place, durst not destroy this, for fear of the people. He contented himself with inventing a religious origin for it, in order to divert the thoughts of the vulgar towards another object: which he effected, by perswading his disciples, that the sins of men had deprived that stone of its whiteness, which it would never recover till after the last judgment, when all nature is to be purified.

On the east side of this holy house, almost right against the middle, and at three cubits distance from it, rises another square edifice; the sides of which, that are towards the light, measure each six cubits, which

which also is nearly the height of it. The roof is supported by four columns, at the four angles of the building. It is flat, and yet it is composed of three stories, the uppermost of which bears a little cupolo, crowned with a crescent of silver double gilt, that shines like pure gold, and was the gift of a caliph, to cover a famous stone that is in great esteem here, namely that which preserves the miraculous footsteps of Abraham, which soften'd beneath the feet of the patriarch, to receive the impression that still remains there. This stone is also by the interpreters of the Alcoran reckon'd one of the evident signs given by GOD to the faithful, demonstrating his choice of this temple, wherein he will graciously hear their vows. Beyond this building, towards the north, is another antient edifice, the entrance to which is through a lofty gate. At the entrance there is an ascent of eighteen steps, which leads to a sort of cover'd pulpit, upon the top of which stands a pyramid. From this pulpit the Imans or priests of the temple preach to the people and pilgrims: a function, in which they succeed the first heroes in their religion, and even Mahomet himself, who declared to the people the greatest part of the Alcoran from hence. At a little distance from this pulpit towards the north, appears the end of the fine colonade which forms the interior enclosure of the Kaaba, of which we shall speak presently. But in this very place begins a breast-work of marble like the rest, which forming a sort of long square, without the line of the colonade, contains the pulpit of which we now speak, the monument of Abraham, and a sort of stair-case of wood, that runs upon wheels,

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by which they approach the door of the Kaaba, when they open it for the satisfaction of any zealous pilgrims who may desire to behold the inside.

In the middle of this square, and fronting the eastern part of the Kaaba, arises an antient gate, formed by two peers of extraordinary bulk and solidity, of about fifteen cubits high, which only sustain a roof, built in the manner of a flat vault, so slender that it is not a quarter of a cubit thick in the middle. This gate is called the old, and was formerly the sole passage to the holy house. Upon this Mahomet caused all his religious and civil ordinances to be affixed, and the keys thereof were entrusted for many ages to the tribe of the * Korashites. It had once great doors of brass, which caliph Moktader took away, to make his own coffin, and in return he gave all that gilt silver, which now covers the monument of Abraham. To the left hand of this gate, but at the distance of thirty cubits, the breast-work being all the way carried on, is a great square building, which extends one of its angles to that of the south-east of the Kaaba: it is ornamented on each side with two gates and two windows, which denote it a foreign structure, after the manner of the Grecian architecture. It is remarkable chiefly for its roof,

* These Korashites, of whose tribe Mahomet was descended, becoming enemies to the prophet and his doctrine, obliged him to quit the city of Mecca, accusing him of corruption and innovation in the publick worship. But Mahomet having afterwards overcome them in his turn, generously restor'd them those very keys that he had refused to his son-in-law, telling them, that justice and truth ought to be the support of his family, and not violence and force.

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which is gilt, adorned with four stories, and is crowned with a cupolo and a crescent. This building covers the principal mouth of the well, called Zamzam, which according to the tradition and doctrine of the Musulmen, is the same that the angel shew'd Agar, Ismael's mother, when they were driven into the desert. Lower, there are two more buildings, that also extend their angles on the same line, which afford other passages to the same well, designed no doubt to prevent the inconveniences arising from such a multitude of pilgrims coming to the same place. Each of these edifices have roofs of the same structure with the former, and are nearly of the same height, and are all built of white marble. On the north side is a wall of marble, six cubits high, which describes a semicircle, in such a manner that its extremities overshoot the breadth of the Kaaba about three cubits. Within the enclosure of this wall is the sepulchre of Ismael, which is only a tomb-stone of marble, lying flat on the ground without any inscription, which is water'd with the rain that runs off from the roof of the Kaaba. This is all that lies to the east and north of that holy house, the west and south sides are entirely vacant.

But what strikes the spectators with most surprize and attention is, the magnificent colonade disposed circularly about the Kaaba, in such a manner, as nevertheless not absolutely to enclose it; for beginning at the south-east, overagainst the black stone, it ends at the north-east, near to the antient pulpit of which we have spoken. So it should seem, that it

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only forms indeed about three quarters of a compleat circle; and yet this distance is seven hundred and eighty cubits, or thirteen hundred and sixty five feet. This extent is adorned with fifty two columns of white marble, of the height of twenty cubits, built without proportion, and without any other capitals than a sort of turban that crowns them; neither have they any bases, but are join'd to each other by a balustrade, within which they are all inserted. Upon this balustrade runs along a broad ledge, which bears about two thousand silver lamps, which they light up every night. The columns are also tied together at the top by large bars of silver, from each of which several lamps depend, on chains of gold, which they light up likewise, making a prodigious illumination, not to mention that around the monument of Abraham, and those of the other buildings of the sanctuary. To conclude, without the colonade, are placed three more buildings, square, and cover'd, supported with pillars, and topp'd with roofs of different forms. They serve for mosques to three principal sects of orthodox Mahometans, who go thither to perform their devotions. That of the Hambalites is the plainest; and is placed on the south side of the end of the colonade, leaving a void space to the building that covers the Zamzam or well of Ismael. The second is that of the Malakites, and stands to the west, being supported by eight columns. The third, which has a roof with three stories, adorned with pillars above and below, lies to the north, over-against the tomb of Ismael, and belongs to the disciples of Kanifah. The great vacant place on the
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other side of this building is paved with marble, and only serves for a receptacle to those who come hither to their devotions. They have carpets carried into this mosque by their slaves, for their convenience; for they always enter it with their legs and feet bare, and without external ornaments; keeping there a silence and decorum so exact, that, tho' the Musulmen are always devout in their temples, they apparently distinguish this above all others, the principal object of their faith.

In going out of the temple, we return through the same piazzas by which we enter'd; and here the stately structure of this noble edifice rushes upon the sight with astonishing magnificence. First we behold the proud ascent on steps of marble; above them we see the bending arches form'd by the rising columns, to the number of fifty-five, on every side of the square, at the distance of about eighteen feet from each other, and of the same height to the center of each arch. The breadth of the galleries is also eighteen feet; but the vaulted roof and the arches themselves are too flat, according to our present notion of architecture; which would cause this building to appear too low, were it not relieved by the domes that form the roof. There are, on each of the four sides, twenty seven of these cupolos, of gilded lead, each of them covering exactly two arches. They are all crowned with crescents of the height of three feet, which, with the elevation proper to each dome, measure about twenty two feet upwards from the entablature; so that the whole height of these piazzas, taken from the bottom of the steps and the ground of the temple, is about twelve fathom. This

point of view is so much the finer, because every arch is crossed by a bar of gilt metal, upon which hang several lamps, each of them having a great many wicks or branches of cotton, which not only enlighten the whole gallery all night, but also answer the illumination around the Kaaba. All this prodigious number of lamps are lighted up regularly in the evening, at the appearance of the first star, and go not out till the day makes their light useless. The whole number of columns that form the four porticos are two hundred and twenty, the number of arches two hundred and sixteen, and of the cupolos one hundred and eight, exclusive of the four great spires or turrets. Such is the description given us by Reland of a place, to which no Christian ever had the boldness to approach. A description which the Turks and Arabians themselves are not capable of making, by reason of their profess'd neglect of all the agreeable arts, and among the rest, of painting and drawing: but which an ingenious Swede has collected from the conversations he had upon this subject with several pilgrims during a long abode he made in the city of Cairo.

As to the antiquity of this edifice, we have already rehearsed all that common fame attributes to the Kaaba, and the contiguous buildings. The temple, at first, was not very spacious, it was only encompass'd by a strong wall, which had but one entrance into the holy place. Caliph Omar the first, caused that enclosure to be made larger, in consideration of the great number of pilgrims, the multitude of which encreased in proportion to the progress of Mahome-

But he placed no new ornament there, nor did

did he once think of applying any part of his immense riches to that purpose : no, the simplicity of his religious notions allow'd him not to believe, that GOD would be more honour'd or better pleas'd with the new adornment of a building so venerably ancient, rather than with letting it still continue in a form that had ever been acceptable unto him.

But when the sovereignty came into the family of Ommia, the religious cities of Mecca and Medina, which were also the principal of the Mahometan empire, rose up in arms against their government, and haughtily demanded vengeance for all the blood they had unjustly spilt. This complaint was followed by a revolt from Jasid, who had before been violently exclaimed against for his irreligion. This rebellion obliged him to send a powerful army into the Hagias, under the conduct of Hofaim the son of Sameir. But that general never made himself master of Mecca ; which was defended by the renowned Abdallah, the son of Zobair, an uncle of the prophet's, and one of the bravest Musulmen of his time, but the only one among them whom history charges with avarice. Yet such were the mighty efforts of Hofaim, that the enclosure of the temple was broke down in many places, and 'twas thought that at last he would have carried it by storm, if the news of the death of Jasid had not obliged him to a sudden raising of the Siege.

Soon after, Abdallah assumed the title of caliph ; and being recognized as such through all Arabia, he immediately signalized his zeal for the re-establishment of the temple. He form'd a new plan of it, which nevertheless could not be executed, but only in the least part, by reason of the wars he was

forced to carry on against the children of Jafid. Hagiage, one of the generals of caliph Abdelmalec, besieged Abdallah again in the city of Mecca, where he defended himself for seven months. At length he retreated into the temple it self, and there sustained an assault for three days and three nights, during which the illuminations were not intermitted; but he was slain upon the morning of the fourth day. So fell the last, not of the companions of the prophet, but of those whom he had thought worthy to succeed him, from the great hopes he had conceived of their constancy and courage, from his most tender years. Hagiage, afterwards, fully expiated this profanation. For he took occasion from hence to re-establish the temple, to beautify it with porticos, and to raise it to that noble state in which it now appears. This work was quite finished in the year of the Hegira seventy six; three years after the death of Abdallah. But the first caliphs of the Abassides, whose magnificence is so renowned in history, were desirous of founding an edifice still more sumptuous, thinking to augment the devotion of the people, and signalize their own zeal.

But the doctors consulted upon that enterprize answer'd, that with respect to religious worship, HE who had establish'd it in this place at first, left it for many ages in its natural poverty, without the support of princes, who might have enriched it: that the prophet, the interpreter of the will of GOD, had only prescribed a reverence and decency agreeable to the sanctity of the place, because gold and pebbles are equally the creatures of the same omnipotent Sovereign; that if the present rulers

lers introduced the propos'd alterations, it might be thought, that the temple would become merely the object of entertainment to proud and wealthy princes: that other lords hereafter might perhaps conclude it lawful for them to despoil it of those riches which their predecessors had lavishly heap'd upon it, without any just or reasonable motive: that, finally, the indiscreet piety of princes, confounding the sentiments of their generosity with the zeal due to religion, would, by such an unnecessary profusion of their vast wealth, naturally incite the avarice of their successors; who might easily seize it, not only to supply their real necessities, but also to minister to their criminal passions. The consequence of all this was, that Almanzor, Almamoum, Alraschid, Almahadi, and some others, disgusted at these just observations, contented themselves with adding to this temple, each according to the devotion of his own heart, the several decorations that are now seen there. It was the caliph Almanfor that cloathed the holy house and cover'd it. Omar II. one of the Ommiad caliphs, and a great Mahometan saint, had before given the beams of brass, and the lamps which are suspended in the piazzas. They ascribe to the same Omar the present of the bars of silver that join the columns of the inward enclosure; but 'tis said, that the caliph Almamoum caused the lamps that were first hung there, to be changed for those of gold that now adorn the colonade. Others were desirous to banish from the temple all ordinary metals of common use, and to allow nothing but gold to be seen there. But in short, as devotion diminished, especially after the princes declined performing the

pilgrimage personally, these things have remained in their present state for about 1000 years. One thing remarkable, with relation to the prodigious riches of this temple, is, that they were all preserved in spite of that almost general revolt that happen'd in Arabia in the 4th age of the Hegira, which is the 10th century of the Christian epocha. During this terrible war, the Karmates, who were violent hereticks, and opposed the Mahometan worship, became masters of the temple of Mecca by the massacre of above 30,000 men, who were slain in its defence. They perpetrated all manner of barbarities, that a licence unrestrain'd by any discipline, join'd to a power and will to commit all possible mischief, could inspire or suggest. But they enter'd no farther than to the well Zamzam, which they heapt up with infected carcasses; and to the black stone, which they removed to Rafah, having before resolved to throw it into the wilderness, in some place where it should never be found again. But they did not once dream of stripping the temple of its immense riches: on the contrary, they themselves brought back the black stone that they had removed from thence, twenty two years after the taking it away, and hung it to the seventh pillar of the inward colonade, whereupon it received the name of the column of mercy.

From that time to this, there has happen'd no considerable alteration neither in their temple nor form of worship. This last consists in lectures, prayers, and sermons, allotted to certain stated hours by day and night. They practise no macerations,

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nor fastings, they have no whips, nor other rigorous discipline: they perform every thing, to outward appearance, with the most profound reverence, and deepest humility, and with an adjustment, perhaps too scrupulous, at least in the judgment of nations so politely careless as we are. Furthermore, the temple is served by an infinite number of ministers, and daily enriched by the gifts of multitudes of pilgrims, brought from all parts of the world. This religious custom, is the result of their common practice in civil society, it being a maxim with them, never to approach the Great empty handed. So we must not conclude from these presents of the pilgrims, that the Mahometan religion exacts them; or that this concourse of people is owing to some secret sinister principle. For the temple is not the only object of the piety of the Musulmen in these journeys, that they undertake with so much peril, and oftentimes from so remote a distance.

The mountain of Arafat, lying to the south-east, five leagues from the city of Mecca, is the place, according to their tradition, where Adam and Eve met again, after they had separated one from another (upon their being driven by an angel out of paradise) in order to accomplish their penance, which lasted for two hundred years. Providence conducted them to this mountain; concurring with their design of seeking the place, which God had decreed from the foundation of the world, for the reconciliation of those that should have transgress'd his commandments; and where he would graciously hear the prayers of those that should turn unto him,

acknowledging his unity and power. In commemoration of this happy re-union of our first parents, the pilgrims go to offer upon this mountain a real and acceptable sacrifice ; so to renew the practice of the most early days. The way that leads from Mecca to this mountain is remarkable for the different roads to which the law obliges the pilgrims. The first is the valley of Mina, three miles from the city : as they are going to offer up themselves, they are obliged to purify themselves there by shaving their heads : after that, they cast seven stones on a heap in the road, to express their inward disengagement from all earthly things, and their most favourite passions. From Mina, they cross the valley of Bath-mohafer to arrive at a great space enclosed with walls, at the corner of which is raised a high turret of three stories. This is called the wall of Ibnomar. Here the pilgrims say their prayers, and then go to the mosque called Mosch-dela-fach, which is the place where they assemble together, and there continue their devotions. This mosque is built upon the southern declivity of a little mountain, which bears upon the valley of Gassan. And this is the shortest way to the city of Tayif, if they durst profane it by common use. For as the greatest part of the provisions that are consumed in Mecca, are brought thither from Tayif, so the carriers are obliged to take a round-about way, making it a journey of five days, for fear of hindering or disturbing the devotion of the pilgrims.

We may, from this recital, pretty nearly collect the common notions of the Musulmen concerning
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the city of Mecca, and the places thereabouts. They lay the scene here of all the principal events of the first ages; adhering to the accounts they have taken from the books of the Jews, which are very plenty over all the East. The doctrine of a particular election of certain places and families, caused them to espouse the imagination, that Mecca was sanctify'd from the creation of the world, by the absolute Lord of nature; who has chosen a desert cover'd with sands and rocks, before the pleasanter countries of the earth, to compel men to come to him for his own sake, without any mixture of other objects of their desire. A prejudice, in which they have been confirm'd by the concurrent practice of pious men of all ages. Adam, the first of men and of sinners, fallen under the displeasure of his Maker, had no refuge in his misfortune, till he arrived at a place where he might with humble confidence lift up his eyes and voice to the mercy-seat of the Omnipotent. All the other prophets have frequented the same place; and have there obtained, sometimes, the conversion of the ungodly, and at other times, vengeance upon their scorers and persecutors. Here Ismael, (companion of his mother's flight, who was driven out by an imperious and jealous mistress) found that living water which effectually quenched his thirst; and made him see clearly the vanity of those objects, which the false world shews us in a deceitful light. Here, too, he found that strength and power which he wanted, to combat his own enemies and the adversaries of truth, and which was necessary to make him the father of a

chosen nation. Abraham acknowledged this election of GOD, and built here a house in the simplicity of his faith. This is the foundation of all. For without all controversy, ever since the sojourn of Abraham, or at least, from the time of that patriarch, the Arabians have constantly maintained a religious worship in that very place.

The Alcoran has often magnified the advantages of this temple ; it speaks particularly of them in the chapters entitled Braktan and Aram. In the former it introduces GOD speaking to men, and declaring to them that he has establish'd an house which shall furnish them with the means of acquiring great rewards. And in the latter, GOD, speaking in his own person says to himself, " The first temple erected by men to the honour of the true GOD, is the temple of Mecca ; that is the place of benediction ; the guide of all the faithful ; and where I have graciously poured forth my evident signs and remarkable tokens for the conviction of the most incredulous." The interpreters that have explained the last passage, seem to have sought the true sense, with less prejudice than is usual in religious disquisitions. Indeed, they all agree, that, without attending to the prejudice imbibed by all the Musulmen, the sanctity and election of this temple ought to be proved by evident signs, as the prophet assures us they were placed there by GOD, even for the conviction of all men ; and they distinguish them into two sorts, according to the force of the expression in the text.

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The evident signs destined to force the persuasion of infidels at first sight, are, 1. The stone that received the footsteps of Abraham ; for the depth and form of the impression is such, that 'tis impossible for any human artist to express the like, with all the power of the chissel. So that the stone itself must of necessity have grown soft, by the will of GOD, beneath the feet of the patriarch ; and, like an elaborated paste, took that exquisite impression, which has preserv'd the minutest traces and most imperceptible lineaments. We must add to this miracle, the conservation of so frail a monument, which might have been broken to pieces, at pleasure, by the enemies of the divine worship establish'd in that place, had not the supreme power and providence of GOD diverted them to other objects, which however did by no means lessen their guilt. For though this stone has, now, all its first natural hardness, yet, 'tis plain that it was less difficult to reduce this to powder, than it was for those impious wretches to carry away, as they did, the black stone, to a distance of five days journey ; or than it was, for them to heap up the well with infected carcases. This preservation of the stone is the more miraculous, considering its duration, which extends to five thousand years, without the least damage or diminution happening to the sacred representation it exhibits. The second sign, is the black stone, which is a direct testimony of the fall of man ; GOD having deprived this stone of its original whiteness, and glorious lustre with which it once beamed, to represent the loss of their first innocence and the present depravity of the human will.

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The unbelievers will say, (and 'tis a very obvious objection) that the stone is black, and always was so. To this 'tis reply'd in the Alcoran, "That it is the
 " habit of wicked men not to believe what is past,
 " and not to fear the things that are future, only depending upon what they see. If they did but reflect, (say the Musulmen) upon the examples of
 " former times, they would rightly conclude that he
 " who drowned his enemies by overflowing the earth
 " with a deluge, could very easily bereave a stone of
 " its beauty. Do the waters still cover the face of
 " the earth? or does the stone still shine? The world
 " shall be judged; the wicked shall perish; and the
 " stone shall recover its lustre. This ye will believe,
 " when ye shall behold it. But O how much happier had it been, if ye would have believed, while
 " that faith might have kept ye in awe of those miseries that then ye shall sadly experience!" The
 third sign is the miraculous well, which was open'd by an angel in the middle of the desert, to preserve the life of an innocent child, abandoned even by a righteous man, who was his father. A picture of the blindness of our judgment; the crime or the infirmity of that mortal nature which we carry about us; but at the same time an invincible proof of the protection GOD always affords to virtue, though not drawn forth into act, of which this child was as yet incapable, by reason of his age and circumstances.
 " The election of GOD is precious, (says the Alcoran) and he who receives the testimony of the
 " well adores it; he receives or rejects it, as it deserves." " This is that terrible thought (says he
 " in

“ in another place) that hath separated or dislocated
 “ the frame of my bones, and has silver’d my hairs
 “ before old age comes upon me.”

This is the amount of their evident signs, and external testimonies found in the temple : but we must add three others, which they boast of as no less certain, though they are rather derived from opinion than the senses.

The first is the right of sanctuary, which the temple has possessed these many thousand years, without any body’s ever calling it in question ; and without ever being violated by any impious hand, that was not remarkably punish’d for it, so as to be an example to the times they lived in, and a memorable warning to posterity ; till those guilty wretches have been forced to acknowledge that they suffer’d most justly. This sanctuary comprehends, besides the security of criminals, the absolute prohibition of all violence within the consecrated enclosure. The second testimony, is the incredible plenty of every thing, which they always enjoy in this wilderness, notwithstanding the perpetual resort of pilgrims thither from all parts, notwithstanding the sterility of their stony territory, and their distance from any places of culture and improvement. The Musulmen remark this as the effect of the promise of the angel to Ismael and Agar, when he assured them that this place should never want the necessaries of life, nor even its conveniencies and pleasures unto the end of the world. They add, that the angel likewise declared, that Tayif should be the support of it : which is accomplished at this very day : for notwithstanding its great distance, Mecca derives

the far greatest part of her provisions from thence, and sends back in return immense sums of gold and silver. Which is the common way of maintaining commerce, without any regard to prophecies. And lastly, the third sign is, that inclination of heart, which all the faithful are affected with, towards this holy place, attended with sentiments so quick and touching, as draw tears from the most austere and flinty natures, at the first sight of those domes which have been revered through so many ages. All the world knows that the Mahometan religion obliges its professors to frequent prayers, that acquire the utmost circumspection to be regularly perform'd; but their chiefest care is to observe, while they pray, to turn their face towards the temple of Mecca. Probably, this is the first impression made on their infancy; from whence they derive that rooted prejudice in its favour, which disposes their minds for forming some grand idea of it; regarding it as a place to which all the faithful resort, at least once in their life time. The certain effect of which visitation is, inward peace of mind, a happy calm of conscience, and the sweet experience of grace and mercy, which lead to everlasting felicity. There needs no more to melt the most savage heart, especially towards an object which they behold so rarely.

As to the testimonies of the second sort, which are only qualify'd to be entitled remarkable things, because men may be more or less affected with them according to their disposition; they reckon the first to be the determination of the law, which obliges the faithful, in their prayers, to turn their faces to-
wards

wards that place, where they ought to be themselves, in order to obtain audience of the Almighty. For tho' this institution might seem arbitrary, in that Mahomet changed it twice, yet it must be presumed there were reason for so doing sufficiently strong, since they prevailed in the prophet's mind over the inconvenience of that variation, which might have given scandal even in affairs of less importance. The second is, the vanity of several ineffectual attempts for the destruction of the temple, which, altho' profaned and defiled by idols, has always been protected by the same Almighty Being, who arm'd even the birds of the air in its defence. The Alcoran relates this event in the chapter of the Elephant, upon the subject of the defeat of Abraham the Ethiopian, and of all his forces, " which were destroyed by an " army of crows, who hovering in the air, and being stretch'd out exactly over the army of the infidels, crush'd them to pieces with stones, that they " had carried up on high in their beaks and claws." The third is, the reverence paid by all nature to this temple, which no animal dares ever approach, and upon whose domes the very birds that wing the firmament, never settle. The fourth is, the universal concourse of strangers from all parts, as well from the extremities of the earth as from the neighbouring countries, who all come hither to seek that joy, and hope, and consolation, that the riches, the honours, and pleasures of the world cannot give, nor assure to their possessors. The fifth is, the testimony that all the prophets have given to it successively, in visiting it, in order to adore GOD by pouring out their souls

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here before him, and drawing in from this holy place the graces and powers requisite to sustain their divine mission, without fearing the objects of terror, the torments, or even deaths that might be offer'd them by the persecutors of the truth. The sixth and last testimony is that of the host of angelick spirits that watch over the security of this temple and this city, to maintain there a supernatural plenty, and to cause peace and tranquillity to reign there from generation to generation for ever. And these are all the proofs or testimonies by which they pretend GOD has signalized his election of a place so horrid and deform'd by nature. But we have spoken enough of Mecca and its temple; let us now say something of Medina, which is more properly the city of Mahomet.

Next to Mecca, the most renowned city in Arabia is Medina; not for its antiquity, or its riches, but because it was chosen by the prophet, to be the seat of his residence, when the interest of his religion obliged him to abandon his country, which was blind to the truth and ungrateful to his zeal, that he might reserve himself there to more favourable times, when better dispositions might aid the success of his labours. This is also the place where he died, and where his sepulchre is still visited to this day by all those who perform the great pilgrimage. Its name Medina signifies, in the language of the country, no more than a city, or the habitation of a number of people; and therefore custom has added to it the epithet Alnabi, which is to say, the city of the prophet, and as they understand it at this day, the place of his repose.

'Tis

'Tis situated in a very low plain, in the province of the Hagias, which was formerly known by the name of the valley of Jatret : nevertheless they have here only well-water. Ptolomy the geographer distinguishes this district by the name of Jatriba, which is plainly derived from Arabia ; but there was only some dispersed habitations here then. The Arabians who first undertook to raise a city here, lived about one hundred and fifty years before the birth of Mahomet. They gave it the name of Thaiba, which was changed for that of Medina when it was encreas'd in houses and citizens, by reason of the prophet's residing there.

The first caliphs, or successors of Mahomet, made this also the place of their residence, and are here buried near to the prophet. So this city may be looked upon as the most ancient capital of the Mahometan empire. Ali, son-in-law to Mahomet, removed his seat from hence to Coufah in Chaldea, where he was more beloved, and his violences were not so well known. His children also lived there some time, tho' their interest seemed to require their return to the centre of the religion, as the legitimate heirs of Mahomet. The city of Medina was so attached to them, that it even refused to submit to Jafid, esteeming him a cruel usurper, who ought to be called to account by the society for all the blood he had unjustly shed. But this refusal of theirs cost them dear : for Moslam, one of Jafid's generals, sat down before the city, and caused a massacre of all its inhabitants. But the malediction of the prophet against all those that should offer violence to the place of his repose,

repose, was first accomplish'd upon the person of this general; for he survived his crime but three days. This was in the seventy second year of the Hegira. Valid, the sixth caliph of the race of the children of Ommia, twenty five years after, built in that city, a great and magnificent mosque, that is still to be seen there; in which he united as well that which the prophet himself had consecrated, as the garden likewise wherein he was buried, with his three first successors; over whose tombs he raised chappels, and gilt cupolos, whose structure was worthy the precious relicks they enclosed. He also settled there, Mollahs, or students, to read constant lectures upon the Alcoran over these sepulchres; and to tend there a certain number of lamps, in honour of the illustrious dead, according to the custom of the Arabians. An establishment to be ascribed to the policy of the declared persecutor of the family of the prophet; but which totally overthrows the notions our fathers had imbibed of a real worship render'd to Mahomet by his followers; such as the catholicks pay to the greatest saints, whom they regard, not only as arrived at bliss, but also invested with a power of working miracles in their favour. Very far from any such thought, the Musulmen, tho' persuaded of the high vocation of the prophet, yet pray without ceasing for the continuation of his rest, 'till the time of the recompence, prepared for him, and for all the just, at the manifestation of the judgment of GOD.

There was likewise formerly a very absurd imagination concerning the form of Mahomet's tomb. 'Twas pretended, that himself, or his successors, had
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order'd that his bones should be put into a steel coffin, and the walls of the chappel where he was to be deposited being lined with loadstones of great spirit and vigour, the coffin was suspended, and remained in the middle of the empty space of that chappel, by means of the attractive force of all these stones : a proper piece of craft to sanctify or deify in the minds of the vulgar so notorious and avow'd an impostor as Mahomet was. But this fiction has so little appearance of reality, and refers so manifestly to the notions of the saints, and their miracles, and moreover betrays so profound an ignorance of the fundamentals of the Mahometan religion and its œconomy, that 'tis impossible for us not to impute this invention to the heavy monks who dwelt in Palestine at the times of the crusades. Times, wherein relicks, and their particular miracles, were thought the essentials, or if I may so speak, the hinges of christianity. A very evident mark, that they know as little of one religion as of the other, tho' they forged these chimeras. But to return to the mosque of Medina. It is certain that it has the honour to be the first that had Mahomet himself for its preacher : in short, that it boasts the glory of containing within its sacred precincts, the ashes of the last of all prophets, as well as those of the heroes he animated, by his bravery, to spread with terror to the utmost limits of the world, the knowledge of what he had so greatly conceiv'd, and so happily express'd in his speeches and writings, that he made (as we have said before) as many transported enthusiasts as there were men among his disciples. I will not enter into a long description of the

the other cities of Arabia, because at the times whose history I am writing, most places of little consideration were inhabited by the Jews. For the Arabians then preferr'd the happy liberty and glorious independence of the deserts, to all the charms that other nations found in a confined society, like that living in cities. This is the reason of the frequent quarrels that Mahomet had with the Jews; who having, after their dispersion, escaped in great numbers into the countries inaccessible to the Romans, multiplied here, and became powerful enough, in numbers and riches, to create him great disturbance and opposition.

But it is necessary to give some idea of the history of the country, as well the antient, comprehending what happen'd in Arabia a little while after the patriarchal age, as that which immediately preceded the times of Mahomet. Thereby the reader will be better instructed, in order to judge of the several circumstances of the times wherein he appear'd; of the prejudices for and against him; of the dispositions of providence, or the preparations of nature, for that prodigious change, which one single man, weak and destitute, has introduced into the world.

We have already seen that the people of Arabia refer their origin to different patriarchs, nearly agreeing with what the holy scripture tells us of them. And among those first ancestors, we may look upon Joktan the son of Heber as the principal founder of the nations that inhabit the remotest parts of the peninsula; and the inhabitants of the desert bordering upon Chaldea and the Persian Gulph, as sprung from
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Cush the son of Ham. We have likewise seen that the people of Arabia the Stony, and the other borders of the Red-Sea, are the posterity of Abraham, and are descended either from the tribes issuing from Ismael, or from the children of Keturah his second wife. At least we may easily imagine that this posterity prevail'd over the people who before inhabited the same country, either by driving them out, or by incorporating with them. We have also learnt that to prevent the imagining a confusion of people, (always more easy to be supposed, than a total extermination by some barbarous conqueror) and to induce us to look upon the Ismaelites as a pure and unmixed nation, the Arabian tradition, confirm'd by the Alcoran, asserts that the Thamodites and the other children of Aram, who had long inhabited this very country, were all destroyed by a judgment from heaven, and so made room for the children of Abraham. No person can be ignorant of the strong inclination of the eastern nations to preserve the history of their origin, and to found upon that principle the distinctions of people; tho' the present unpoliteness of the Turks and other northern nations that have ravish'd Asia from the Arabians, has destroyed all that distinction. The custom of Europe is altogether as opposite; for we are effectually distinguish'd among us, by the very diversity of our tongues. But in those early ages, the people of the East were destitute of that natural distinction, because they had all but one language.

Abraham, when he went out of Chaldea, even from beyond the Euphrates, was understood in Egypt
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and in Arabia as well as in Palestine ; of this, the several journeys he undertook, without an interpreter and without any interruption of social commerce, is a strong proof. We know, that at this day, the languages of these several countries seem to be derived from the same common root ; and we discover something of them in the Hebrew, which has been a dead language for above two thousand years. They had nothing therefore at that time, to keep up the distinction of people, but by preserving the memory of their original ; according to the custom which had also spread into Greece, and which prevailed there, till the restless humour of mankind increasing, they sometimes projected governments, sometimes invasions, and at other times removed themselves by long journeyings, and traversings, and turnings, which have confounded the people of all nations, as well with respect to their origin, as to their language and dialect. This being premised, we may rest assured that the inhabitants of Yaman were the first Arabians who had kings. History expressly tells us, that the children of Jerah, son of Joktan, first conferr'd this dignity upon their father, with which he was invested by a particular salutation, which remained the settled form of inauguration of the kings of that country in succeeding times. We have an account of forty six successors to Jerah ; containing a space of two thousand four hundred and twenty years, which according to our chronology ends about two hundred years after the vulgar *Æra*.

There is nothing to be remarked in this long train of kings, except a gentle, peaceable, and uniform govern-

government, exempt from the revolutions so frequent in other countries: where the ambition of sovereigns awakens that of their subjects; where the violent love of luxury sharpens avarice, and breaks forth in prodigality; in a word, where no private man has sufficient force of mind to content himself with that fortune, which would have surmounted the ambition of his father. 'Tis pretended nevertheless that one of these princes, the 40th from Jerah, (whose age is not marked much the better by that distinction) discover'd the vanity of idols, and labour'd with all his might to convert his people from their error, by causing Judaism to be preach'd unto them, and inviting them by his own example to embrace it. 'Tis added, that his successor, still more rigid, was desirous of forcing his subjects into it, by establishing a sort of inquisition, which condemned the obstinate to the flames. In fine, we are told that the last of these forty six successive princes, was driven out by the Persians, who possessed themselves of the government, and reigned over the province of Yaman for eight generations after this last king. Nevertheless it is not agreed whether from that time the kingdom of Yaman became a province of the great Persian monarchy, the administration thereof being delegated to particular governors, or whether it still remained a distinct and separate kingdom, tho' at the same time dependent on that empire. Their history is not herein sufficiently positive, only telling us, that Yaman was conquer'd from the Persians by the Abissins from the other side of the sea; who were called into the country by the Christians, whom the

rigour of the Persian government drove to that extremity.

This history might justly be suspected, from the small probability there is, that the primitive Christians should have a humour for intrigues of state, in Arabia, who, in the midst of the Roman empire, detested war, and rejected all employment, because they thought it opposite to the spirit of their religion : but since it is pretty certain that the invasion of the Abissins was about a hundred years before the birth of Mahomet, and that fixes it to about the year of our Lord 460 or 470 ; we may be confident that in those times the maxims of the primitive Christians were no longer practis'd ; and 'tis too true that latter Christians have made no scruple of going to war, or of cabaling, or even of conspiring against princes and the best established governments. Besides, they justify this chronology by a very plain calculation ; for if from the year 470 we take 230 years for the duration of eight generations, all which time the power of the Persians was acknowledged in Yaman, we shall find that their conquest was in the year of our Lord 240, only twelve years after the re-establishment of the Persian monarchy, which happen'd in the reign of Alexander Severus about the year 228 of the vulgar Æra : and thus the Arabian chronology of the entire duration of the royalty in the country of Yaman, will be exactly verified, even from its commencement.

Again, this very calculation renders what their history relates of the introduction of Judaism and Christianity into Arabia, tho' at different times, and upon different

different principles, exceeding probable, and almost palpable. Indeed that of Judaism happen'd about the times, either of the overthrow of Jerusalem by Titus, or of the emperor Adrian; the severity of which obliged the Jews to abandon the countries under their dominion, and retire wherever they could. This is an evident cause of the dispersion of that people, which was followed by the passage of a great number of them into Arabia, as a neighbouring country to Judea, and as a place where they need no longer fear the effects of the Roman hatred. But on the other hand, this people, always restless, and desirous of making Profelites, could not fail to improve the favourable opportunity of the king of Yaman's conversion, and to excite him to force his subjects to embrace the same religion, with a view perhaps, of erecting there a new republick in the room of that the Romans had just destroy'd; or of calling in thither their dispersed brethren, in order to render themselves at length masters of the country, and to expel the present possessors.

As to the manner how Christianity got footing in Arabia, it may justly be ascribed to the outrageous disputes of its parties and sects, such as the Arians, Nestorians, Jacobites, Eutychians, Monothelites, Origenists, and others, who compelled each other alternately to yield to the most violent, or to the prevailing party at court; punishing one another with degradations, excommunications, banishments, confiscation of goods, and rigorous imprisonments. We may justly think, I say, that in such perilous times, the real Christians could only betake themselves to

flight ; and this occasion'd vast multitudes of them to retreat into remoter countries than Arabia. With respect to the Ethiopians, they enter'd Yaman under the conduct of a chief whose name was Aryat ; he made his residence at Sanaa, which was the principal city of that province. How long he reigned is not known precisely ; but 'tis certain he was a declared enemy to the religion of the country ; and that in opposition to the pompous worship at Mecca, he caused a temple of like frame and magnificence to be erected at Sanaa, and was very desirous his subjects should make that place the seat of their devotion.

Abraham, surnamed Alashram from a scar he had in his face, succeeded this first king ; and conceived so particular a zeal for the new worship, that in order to its compleat establishment, he vowed the destruction of the temple at Mecca. And he actually marched thither a powerful army ; but it only effected its own destruction ; and, if we can credit the Alcoran, it was miraculously overthrown by an infinite number of birds, armed with stones, which they let fall from on high, and dash'd out the brains of all the soldiers. This Abraham is surnamed in the Alcoran, the Lord of the elephants, because, after the Indian manner, he had a great number of them in his army : but all this formidable force availed nothing against the Omnipotent power that repulsed him from before that holy place.

This event was so well known in the time of Mahomet, and the notoriety of it was so general, that without giving a particular account of it, he only
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mentions it, as an unquestionable fact, and draws an argument from it, of the uncontrollable might of GOD, who can arm the meanest of his creatures against error, and on the side of truth. Nevertheless, Abraham reigned no less than fifty years, and it does not appear that so signal a judgment made any impression upon his conscience. His children succeeded him in the kingdom Kalitum was his first successor, and next to him his brother Mafruck. But the strength of their government was not equal. For a certain Arabian, named Sayif obtaining the protection and assistance of the Persians, after he had implored in vain that of the Romans, drove the Abissins out of Yaman, and forced them to repass the sea. And thus ended the dominion of these foreigners, who had an aversion to the natives of the country, because they differ'd from their religion, which probably was Christianity. For 'tis known, that the Abissins were converted in the time of St. Athanasius, patriarch of Alexandria; who, at their desire, sent them a celebrated missionary called Fermentius, who, together with the doctrines of Christianity, settled among them all those rites and ceremonies in which they have made it to consist ever since. However, whether Sayif was himself a christian, or for what other reason soever it was, history acquaints us, that he retained a great many Ethiopians about his person; and that they taking advantage of the opportunities his familiarity allow'd them, assassinated him in an unexpected manner.

This revolution would have open'd an easy return for the Abissins into Yaman, if the king of Persia had

not taken the children and grand-children of Sayif under his protection. Nevertheless, the latter having fallen again into the snares of the Ethiopians, the Persians undertook the preservation of the province ; sending thither a great number of troops, and placing there kings or governors under their immediate authority. The Arabians reckon four successions of them ; the last of which submitted to Mahomet, embraced his new religion, and was confirmed by him in the government of the province. We may see from these several facts, that besides ambition and politicks, which are constantly the principal springs of foreign conquests, religion also enter'd deeply into the causes of those alterations that then happen'd in this part of Arabia.

The Persians were fond of their antient religion Magianism ; this was the religion of their fathers, and is still practised to this day by the Guars. They are said to have received it from Zoroaster, or more probably, from Zerdusch, who reformed it in the time of Darius Hystaspes. The ignorance of the Christians of that age, concerning the principal doctrine of this religion, made them look upon them as meer idolaters ; or at least as worshippers of material fire, because they preserved it perpetually in their temples. Mahomet himself thought no otherwise ; and therefore proscribed them with severity, while he shewed much greater tenderness for opinions much less specious than theirs.

As to Christianity, it labour'd under great difficulties at its first introduction into Persia ; because before it was well known, it was unhappily confounded with an abominable sect, derived from the Manichees, and

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propagated by a celebrated impostor, named Masdack, who, under pretence of rooting out war and contention from among men, held all things in common, even their women. This Masdack having found means to introduce himself into the court of Cabades king of Persia, insinuated his errors into him, and at length so thoroughly persuaded him, that he granted the impostor the enjoyment of the queen herself. She was then mother of a prince who afterwards succeeded to the crown with great glory, and was distinguished by the name of Nouschirvan, or the just king. This prince, touched to the soul at the injury his mother was going to sustain, and not daring to resist the absolute will of his father, threw himself at the feet of Masdack, and by dint of prayers and tears prevailed over the brute, and forced him to abstain from so monstrous an outrage. This was the chief reason that, after he was come to the crown, he set himself to exterminate Christianity out of his dominions, as an everlasting fountain of various whimsies, some more, some less criminal, but all dangerous to the peace of society.

Some time after, there arose a new cause of his hate and aversion to Christianity; for having married a christian lady, whom he could never bring over to his own religion, no more than he could the son he had by her, whom she had secretly educated in the same principles, he reasonably fear'd lest this prince, succeeding him, should declare himself a christian, and thereby cause a general revolution in all his dominions; and this perhaps even before his death. It seems indeed that his son, who was named Nouschi-

rad, in sucking in the doctrines, had not imbibed the spirit, of Christianity, and in taking upon him so zealously the christian name, he had not likewise assumed the christian morals, particularly, that meekness and obedience, it so forcibly presses upon inferiours. His conduct was such, as obliged his father to confine him, and even to imprison him more closely afterwards, when he was leaving his capital to carry on a war with the Tartars and Turks, who had invaded his dominions.

But the father falling sick in this expedition, and the news of it reaching the son in his imprisonment, the latter immediately took an opportunity to make his escape; and then seizes upon his father's treasure, in order to raise an army; with which he soon made himself master of the provinces situated in the heart of the empire. Then Nouschirvan detached one of his generals, with some veteran troops, to oppose the progress of his son; and gave him in writing the instructions he was to follow in so nice an affair. But fortune decided the matter quite otherwise than the old king had hoped. His son persisted in his rebellion, and in his design of dethroning his father; a battle was fought, and the wicked christian was one of the first that fell, without an opportunity of experiencing the clemency of his father. History tells us, that the prince, when he was wounded and dying, order'd that they should bear his body to his mother, and desire her to cause it to be interr'd at the feet of some of those servants of Christ, who had already suffer'd death for His religion. From whence it is evident that there had before this time been some per-

persecution in Persia. But if Nousehirvan was irritated against the Christians when he confounded them with the Manichees, whose madness he had proved; we may suppose that the rebellion of his son, and that corruption of the principles of morality, of which he accused them, on his account, did not contribute much to the bettering his opinion of a profession that he thought capable of inspiring subjects and children with treachery and rebellion: not to mention the prejudice he had entertained, that this religion countenanced certain irregular and dissolute imaginations. In this persuasion he proscribed that new sect by the severest edicts, regarding it as a nursery of Enthusiasts; and ordained in particular that it should be extirpated in the province of Yaman, whither he marched in person, in order to exert himself with the utmost vigour, against the remains of the Abissins.

This monarch reigned in all 48 years, in the 42d of which Mahomet, as he himself tells us, was born. His successors maintained the same authority in the province of Yaman, and the other parts of Arabia. But they could never subjugate the inhabitants of the deserts; whose liberty nothing could ever abridge, but only that esteem and love they sometimes entertained for some princes of superior merit, such as Nousehirvan. Furthermore, what greatly conduced to support the authority of the Persians in this new province of their empire, was, beside the repute of their power and grandeur, the situation of their capital, (which was built upon the Tigris, pretty near where Bagdad has been since raised) which enabled them to keep continually a watchful eye upon all the

motions of the inhabitants. And herein they were obliged to be the more vigilant and attentive, as their special interest required they should prevent the Arabians from entering into any ties or treaties with the Romans, their eternal enemies. And still another reason of their hatred against the christian religion, was, because these Romans imposed their sentiments and prejudices upon all the nations that embraced it: insomuch that the antient laws and customs of every country were no farther respected by the christian converts, than as they agreed with the constitutions of the Romans, and their general practice.

Having said thus much concerning the situation of the capital of the Persian empire, this naturally leads us to speak of that of another part of Arabia, which had kings as well as the province of Yaman. I mean that division of the desert called Irak, which borders on the mouth of the river Euphrates, and contains the famous cities Coufah and Wafid, lying six days journey from the capital of Persia, called by the Grecians, Ctesiphon. But the kingly government was less antient among this wandering people, than with such a nation as the inhabitants of Yaman. And yet, as the reputation of men is commonly no more than the effect of some accidental impulse in themselves, or some disturbance they occasion in the natural course of events, it must be confess'd that history makes more mention of the Arabians of Irak than of those of Yaman; because indeed we know nothing at all of them, but from the accounts of the latter Romans, or rather the Greeks of the lower empire, who

who became acquainted with the Arabians of this province, by means of their wars with the Persians. Not that the more antient emperors, such as Augustus, Tiberius, and Nero, by their generals, and particularly Trajan in his own person, had not led the Roman arms into these parts. But the desert, which should have been crossed by a southerly course, (from Byrrats to the north, or from Damascus to the south, quite to the river Euphrates, being fourteen or sixteen days journey, and all the way without any water) they resolved to traverse by a road much more northerly, either, at least, thro' Mesopotamia, or by following the course of the Euphrates, as Alexander the Great had done, and as Julian the Apostate attempted afterwards, who was there slain.

Of all these emperors, there was only Trajan who ventured himself to encounter the road of the desert, assisted by some intelligence he held with a king in those quarters. But to render it practicable to the necessary convoys, for the subsistence of his army, he caused wells to be dug at stated distances; and the whole way to be paved from Damascus unto the river Euphrates, across a country cover'd with a very deep sand. An eternal monument of the Roman grandeur, and the irresistible courage of a prince worthy of the sublime throne he possess'd; who thus chalked out to his successors a path to immortal glory, if they had not neglected its attainment.

The first king of this country (which we might name Chaldea, if the Arabians, its inhabitants, had not more precisely distinguished it by the name of

Irak) was called Maleik, a word that denotes his very dignity. He lived in the times of the kings of the nations, that is, in the oriental stile, in the times of the successors of Alexander the Great; this prince we know, having conquer'd the vast countries of Persia and India, presently withdrew from thence, in order to return into Europe, and left every where governors, who made themselves sovereigns after his death; and who being scarce known by their particular names, were commonly called the foreign kings, or the numerous kings. Ten successors are computed from this Maleik down to Nooman, surnam'd the squint-ey'd; a prince very illustrious in the history of the Persians, who, on the account of his great qualities, was chosen by Jesdegerdes, the thirteenth king of the second Persians, to educate his son Baharamgur, who was one of the heroes of the east. And he chose him with this particularity, that he sent his son into Irak, without desiring Nooman to remove; and conjured him to train him in the Arabian manner, without sparing him in the least from a prospect of his future greatness. Nooman, on his part, fully justify'd all this confidence, by the cost and care he bestow'd on the young prince. He erected for the residence of his royal pupil two wonderful castles, whose admirable beauty, as well as the fortune of Secmamar, the architect that built them, has employ'd the pens, and graced the songs of many ancient Arabian poets. However, this employment hinder'd not Neoman from fixing his thoughts on things of far greater importance to himself. In short, he embraced the christian religion, with a faith so
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prevalently great, and testified such an affection for heaven, and such a true contempt of the world, that after he had reigned thirty years, with an authority equal to his renown, he retired into Palestine, and died among the monks of the great monastery there, whose profession he had embraced.

There were four successors of this prince to Almondar, who was dethroned by Cabades, king of Persia, out of hatred to him for his resisting the Manichean impostor Mastack. Nouschirvan restored him, when he succeeded to the crown of his father; and they were both, from the same principle, sworn enemies to the christians. He was the son of Mauviah, the daughter of Ausf, a celebrated Arabian queen in the times of the emperors Justin and Justinian. She was the most beautiful lady of the age she lived in: to express which, the Arabians gave her the surname of Maossamain, which signifies the fresh dew of heaven, intimating the glory and delicacy of her lovely complexion. Four other successors of Almondar bring us down to another Nooman, who turned christian upon account of an act of generosity he saw done by an Arabian, the glory whereof he ascribed to his religion. This king built many churches in the less frequented parts of the desert, and died, after a reign of twenty two years, in a war that Cosroes II. a king of Persia, had undertaken to dethrone him. He had three successors, but it seems, they were of another family; and his children, after his death, never ascended the throne of their father. However, 'tis certain that the conquest the Musulmen made of Irak, under the reign of caliph Omar I. swallow'd

swallow'd up both the one and the other ; till at length the victors themselves fixed, in this very country, the seat of their empire and wide dominion.

From this account, short as it is, we may infer that the sovereigns of Irak, were commonly seated on the throne and supported therein, just as they were agreeable or serviceable to the Persian monarchs. And farther we may from hence understand the progress Christianity had made in Arabia when Mahomet appear'd. Which was such, that we may rightly conclude some princes and several private persons of the nation had embraced it, from a real conviction of the truths it taught ; but that it was not the general and common religion of the country. The Arabians contented themselves with forming coarse and unfavourable thoughts of it. In short, being prejudiced on behalf of plain notions, and declared enemies to contradiction, real or imaginary, and being unable to comprehend the doctrines that perplex'd christianity, and observing those very doctrines contested by different parties, they rejected them as gross errors. Besides, the perfection of the christian morality, which abridged their pleasures, set this people against it, who believed that nature had established them rather as her own dictates, than for the gratification of those that enjoy'd them. With these prejudices, it was impossible for them to reconcile the free permission of an odd restless propensity, agitating the whole man, with the prohibition of using pleasure in proportion to the relish arising therefrom. And thus it was that Mahomet afterwards combated christianity, by laying
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down some principles, which, covering the chief difficulties contained in the moral precept as to pleasures, induce an accord between the power of nature and the restrictions of the law.

But farther, as the kings of Persia drew great advantages from the little kingdom of Irak, with regard to their own security, by making it a barrier for stopping the progress of the other Arabians of the desert, and hindering them from spreading beyond those two rivers, the Euphrates, and the Tigris ; in like manner, the kings of Syria, and after them the Romans did not neglect to procure themselves defences of the same sort. They employed to that purpose, a small government which came originally from Irak, and settled itself in a territory called Gasswan, that, in the midst of the deserts, abounded with delicious waters, verdant pastures, and palm-trees bearing most excellent dates. There was also, in the middle of the most scorched plain of Lybia, two places that nature had singularly fertilized by the abundance of waters that she had there pour'd forth. These places, which are not very far from the frontiers of Egypt towards the west, are those that the antient Grecians called Oasis ; evidently derived from the Arabian name Al-Oah, which it bears at this day, and which signifies nothing else, notwithstanding the idea annex'd to the word Oasis, but a place of repose and beatitude in the desert ; as the name Gasswan expresses properly fatness and plenty.

The historians pretend then, that a company of Arabians setting out from Yaman, many ages ago, upon occasion of some misfortunes, and seeking an habitation,

bitation, found this country of Gasswan already possess'd by an antient tribe called Salih. They add, that they drove out those inhabitants, and elected themselves a king of the family of the princes of Irak, who were become their neighbours, and were respected by them even now, as drawing their origin in a direct line from Joktan and his brother, the common family of the princes of Yaman.

The first of these kings of Gasswan, bore the name of Jafuah, and he had thirty one successors, the last of which called Jabulah, having immediately submitted to caliph Omar in the times of the conquest of Syria, he afterwards repented of his embracing Mahometanism, and having escaped out of the hands of the caliph's generals, and fled from his own subjects, shelter'd himself at Constantinople, where he finish'd his life in humiliation and penitence.

'Tis observed, that among these kings of Gasswan, the common name of the princes had been that of Hareth or Al-hareth, from whence the Greeks and Romans plainly took the general denomination of Haretas, which they gave to all the kings of this country. Yet, strictly speaking, there was only five of the family of Jafuah that were so called; one of whom lived in the time of St. Paul, and of the emperor Trajan: but then, they who govern'd before them the tribe of Salih (who as I have already observ'd possess'd the country of Gasswan before it was conquer'd by the Yamanites) were almost all of them called Hareth. Finally, if it were true that the particular kings of Irak lasted only for six hundred and twenty two years and eight months, as some authors

thors have fixed it, we could not then credit the writers who ascribe a much longer duration to those of Gasswan : since these are said to have come from the same family after the former generations who preceded the reign of Jafuah. But as to the conclusion of the dominion of the one and the other, it is certain, they were both swallow'd up by the Mahometan power, under the reign of caliph Omar I.

Besides these kings, which we may stile modern, compared with the antiquity of those of Yaman, it is certain that the inhabitants of the Hagias had theirs also, sprung from the same stock by a son of Joktan. They impute ten successors to the first prince, down to Madad, whose daughter the patriarch Ismael espoused ; and they add, that the tribes subject to these princes, being driven out of the Hagias by Ismael's own posterity, withdrew to a district upon the sea-shore, called Johaina. But that country, being very low, was afflicted with frequent inundations, which in the end occasion'd their total destruction.

The kings of the Kandes also, derived their original from the same family by Jerah, another son of Joktan : but these, we only know from the latter events of their history. For Nouschirvan, after he had resettled Almondar in the kingdom of Irak, gave him permission to avenge himself as he pleased upon the king of the Kandes, who had contributed to his oppression. In consequence of this, Almondar carried war into the country of the Kandes, which lay in some part of Yaman, and there destroy'd at once the government, and even the very memory of that
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people. Infomuch that there had remained no trace, nor monument of their existence, if it had not been for a celebrated poet, named Amruleas ; who nevertheless finding no protection or encouragement in Arabia in the times of the first Musulmen, was forced to go to the court of the Greek emperor, who afforded him a retreat in the city of Ancyra, where he died a christian, and without issue.

This is an abridgment of what is handed down to us by the indefatigable cares and enquiries of the celebrated POCOCK, Arabic professor in the University of Oxford, concerning the royal families in Arabia before the calling of Mahomet. But besides these, authors make frequent mention of certain illustrious persons, who have held the rank of kings or princes among the Arabians ; tho' they have not been able to fix their dominion with any certainty, either as to the district where they exercis'd their authority, or the times wherein they lived. We may very justly compare these to the Judges of Israel, whose valour, glorious actions, and services to their country are recorded, rather than the circumstances of their birth, or the times of their administration.

Such was 1st, Dahak the fierce, whose name the Grecians changed into Dejoces, and took to have been a king of Media. He is very famous over all the east, as well for having erected a vast monarchy, tho' he was born of an obscure family in the desert, as for having expelled the Seïtes, who had made a sort of conquest of upper Asia, and had reigned there for 28 years. But whether it be, that his cruelty had rendered him detestable in his person and posterity.

posterity, or whether it be from the dismembring his empire, and the dividing of his countries, which gave rise to a great many particular monarchies in Chaldea, Syria, Persia, Media, &c. or from whatever other reason, it is certain, the glory of his exploits is so darken'd, that we know more of him from the books of the Grecians, than from all the Arabian authors; who did not think themselves greatly honoured by such a countryman. The 2d was Amrus, the son of Lah, of the race of the kings of Yaman, who commanded in the Hagias. He was the first who polluted the holy house of Mecca, by placing therein the idols of Habal, Asaph and Nayel, that Mahomet had so much difficulty to destroy. 3dly, Zohair, the son of Habal, a diviner, or celebrated astrologer, and perhaps a christian, if we may frame a judgment upon what pass'd between him and Abraham the Ethiopian, whom he advised to erect a new temple in the city of Sanaa, and to establish a sanctuary there, like that at Mecca. 4thly, Colaib, or Vayel Colrib, whose pride and arrogance became a proverb among the Arabians. 5thly, Kais, son of Zohair, whose two horses, Dehet and Gabra, are recorded for the finest that ever Arabia bred. He turned christian at the latter end of his life, and died an hermit upon Mount Sinai. And 6thly, to these illustrious men, we must add the celebrated Mauviah, a queen of the Irak Arabians, as singular for her wit and intrigues, as for her uncommon beauty. There is room to think that she was a christian, but of the sect of the Jacobites, which was condemned both by the Greek and Roman churches; from whence she

she took occasion to engage the Persians to make war upon the emperor Justinian.

But we have now seen enough upon this matter, to enable us to form an idea of the political state of the Arabians, and of their situation with respect to the Persians and Ethiopians, their most formidable neighbours. As for the Romans, 'tis sufficiently manifest from history, that (whether they really thought this country absolutely impenetrable, or dreaded the Arabian manner of combat,) they never led their arms beyond the deserts bordering on Syria and Palestine.

Nevertheless, we must by no means finish this article of the Arabian history without saying something of the kingdom of Palmyra, and of the celebrated Zenobia, who reigned there with so much glory, after, or jointly with, her husband Odenatus. Tadmor, in Greek Palmyra, is one of those happy districts in the deserts, where nature has been pleased to pour forth those waters, she has deny'd to the rest of the country, and whose constant effect is to fertilize the soil, which abounding with salts, only requires to be soften'd with humidity in order to supply the plants with proper nourishment. The salts naturally attract this moisture in the other parts of the world, because the ground affords vapours, which are disposed to diffuse themselves in one place, rather than in another, according to the richness of the soil, that is, the salts that cover its superficies. This is all the whole art of the husbandman; to prepare the earth, by culture, which may render it easy to be penetrated; and to supply it with salts, which may
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attract the temper'd humidity that nourishes the crops : not by overburthening or drowning nature, but by distributing to her a proportional aliment, convertible into the seed which has been committed to the ground.

But in the deserts, the waters run too deep below the superficies of the earth, which being only a light mould, that length of ages, and the heat of the climate has converted into sand, if those waters are not raised by a very uncommon conformation of the inward parts of the earth, it necessarily happens, either that the air is charged with no vapours, or if some are raised by the force of the heat, they are only sulphurous, or fiery, consuming, volatile salts, which rather ravage and destroy the harvests than nourish them. This is what common experience testifies of these countries, where there is no avoiding a burning wind that blows in summer or the beginning of autumn, but by lying down flat on the ground while it passes over. But these winds never last long, because the weight of the salts oblige them to graze along the earth, or altogether to fall down, so that the air is soon freed from them. On the contrary, where the water disposed within the inner parts of the earth is raised nearer the superficies, there, humid vapours are copiously and necessarily afforded, which yield to the plants, suited to these very places, all the moisture they require to nourish and strengthen them ; there we also always find frequent rains ; for nothing but cold can sufficiently subtilise the vapours, to render them still more rarify'd, and consequently more capable of being sustained in the atmosphere. Heat,

on the other hand, has hardly more than one uniform way to act upon the earth, and finds its opposite at a little distance, in the middle region, where cold re-assembles those particles which the force of the sun had dissipated. This is the reason of that common saying current among the Greeks, settled upon the coast of Cyrene in Africa, and who peopled the Pentapolis, that there the sky was bored. For, that rains, so uncommon in Lybia, should yet be so frequent there, was what their philosophy, so very confined with respect to physicks, could by no means discover the reason of.

Such then is, or rather once was the renowned territory of Tadmor. 'Tis asserted at this day, that king Solomon was the founder of a stately edifice here, because it is said in the Holy Scripture, that he built a sumptuous house in the desert; and 'tis moreover supposed that David extended the kingdom of the Jews unto the river Euphrates. Nevertheless, it is visible that this building might be the work of some other king, notwithstanding these two facts recorded in the sacred writings. For indeed, the characters that have been taken up out of the ruins of Palmyra are either Greek or perfectly Syriac. The medals that have been found there, attribute nothing to the Jews, that might induce us to imagine that they ever had any authority in the place. So that 'tis only by way of propriety, that, having a notion of the son of David as the richest prince that ever reigned, we refer to him the raising a structure, the magnificence whereof surpass'd all the works of the Greeks and Romans. Nay they go farther, and pretend that no other prince
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in all the east was able to erect so proud a pile : because the residence of the kings of Persia was too remote from the kingdom of Palmyra ; and the kings of Syria were always too much involved in domestick troubles, or foreign wars, ever to allow themselves to undertake a work whose very ruins fill the spectators with astonishment.

But to this 'tis answer'd, that the architecture of Palmyra corresponds not at all with that which was in use among the Jews in Solomon's time : that the scripture itself testifies that he employ'd a vast deal of wood in the construction of his palaces ; whereas the ruins of Palmyra, on the contrary, consist of an immense heap of stones, of columns of marble, entablatures, and platforms : that here are positively distinguished not only the ruins of a vast palace, but those of two temples also, which could be no work of Solomon, who neither knew, nor could allow of any more than that at Jerusalem : that the kings of Syria have been exceedingly powerful and wealthy, and they have not all been equally exercised with the violences of sedition and war : but if that had been so, it could not have made it impossible for some of these kings to have ordained this labour ; which was augmented and perfected in a course of years, as well by the authority and dependance of other princes, as by a great concourse of people thither, who at length formed there a little republick : that this new state was long maintained by favour of the deserts that environ'd it, and cover'd it from the incursions of the Persians : in a word, that Odenatus, the chief of this republick, had render'd himself so capable of a more

extensive administration, that Gallienus associated him in the Roman empire, and yielded to him the government of the east : that his son and widow supported for some time that exalted fortune ; till being imbroiled with Aurelian, and having even seized upon Egypt, she lost all, by one fatal battle, and was forced to appear at Rome, in the train of the victor, to grace his triumph. This is all that is truly known, concerning that illustrious city of Syria. The Arabians indeed seem to have little concern in what we have recited about it ; but yet it takes up so great an extent of their country, that 'twould have been inexcusable to have omitted what related thereunto. To what has been said, we must add, that the Arabick seems not to have been the language of Palmyra, and that the latter is rather reputed some particular dialect of the Syriac, or of the Armenian, or of some other language, used in some neighbouring country : or perhaps it was a mixture of all three, and of the Greek besides ; as the inscriptions which are come down to us testify ; which raises a conjecture that this city received a Greek colony, at the time of Alexander, as the greatest part of the cities of the same country likewise did.

But as I thought it would be useful to give the reader some instruction concerning the country, and the particular history of the Arabians, doubtless it must be as proper to finish with describing to him the state of religion among those people. We shall be able, by that, to judge of the foundations on which Mahomet established a system of religion, not only fitted to the understandings of his countrymen, agree-
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able to their sentiments, and the reigning customs of the country, but also adapted in such a manner to the common ideas of all mankind, that in less than forty years it drew into its opinions more than half the world ; so that it seem'd as if it was only necessary that the doctrine should be clearly understood, in order to subdue the minds of men to its reception. 'Tis also necessary to attend to the choice of the means employ'd by this new legislator to intoxicate nations with the same enthusiasm with which himself was transported. Means, which represent him perfectly acquainted with the character of those on whom he rely'd for the execution of his mighty enterprize under his own conduct, or for the carrying it on after his death ; but which more particularly respect that talent of persuasion which he possess'd ; by which he arrived at a power, not of bringing the vulgar only into a religion inexplicably mysterious, yet apt to strike the imagination ; but also, the sublimest heroes of the age, for valour, generosity, wisdom, and moderation ; (heroes in spirit and understanding, as well as disposition of heart !) and convinced them all ; in the most untempting manner, and the most contrary to self-esteem, by imposing upon them the necessity of believing every thing that he should please to declare to them, and this without being warranted by any miracles, or juggling pretences to any, or any gift that could be thought supernatural. I acknowledge 'tis difficult to think without amazement on such a force of human eloquence, breaking forth without any thing mild or softening, but accompany'd with an offensive arrogance, that defyed both men and angels

to compose any thing equal to that which he deliver'd to the world.

But to come to the fact ; 'tis highly probable that the Arabians had long preserved, or rather had never lost the notion of a Supreme GOD, the Creator of the universe. 'Tis difficult to prove that they preserved this tradition ever since the first patriarchs ; but 'tis certain, that Mahomet found this article of faith diffused and received among all his countrymen. Only the idea hereof was more or less clear and distinct, according to the different places and characters of the several tribes. 'Tis very certain, that all the Jews and Christians in Arabia, acknowledg'd this truth ; and it is as certain, that even the idolaters themselves did not reject it. Their error consisted not in denying a supreme Deity, but according to Mahomet himself, in confounding his power with that of their idols, or of the subordinate divinities they represented. A mixture, which he proscribed under the name of Association ; because it is impossible that a Being infinite in nature and power should need the concurrence of any other will or power to produce any effect. But this reproach of association, and the consequent appellation of Associators, was not confined solely to the idolaters. Mahomet likewise applied it to the Christians, whose doctrine he condemned principally because they admitted a generation in the Deity. A generation, which he affirmed to be manifestly useless, if it only produced the same GOD ; and plainly contradictory, if it produced another, that was necessary to be associated with the former.

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From hence, it is very evident, that Mahomet understood the christian doctrine but very superficially; perhaps he was averse to a more deep and exact investigation of it, because of the disputes, which prevailed precisely at that time, upon the generation of the WORD, and upon the circumstances of his incarnation. But tho' he had only glanced lightly over the doctrines of christianity, yet it must be allow'd he understood paganism, much better than the antient fathers. For it not likely that idolatry had ever banished the notion of a supreme Deity, absolutely to supply his place with the fictions of some imagination violently affected with fear or hope. 'Tis much more credible that it has always been content to associate with him, some other objects of worship, formed by the passions. Perhaps this is the ground of St. Paul's saying the God of the Greeks must be adored; but not worshipped after their manner.

I gladly now return to the praise of the solitude of the Arabians, which, not permitting them to know all the irregular imaginations of other nations, has exempted them both from their crimes, and numberless superstitions. It has preserved among them the natural notion of the true GOD for a length of ages; and that with little adulteration; and if we extend this reflection to the examination of the principle of those errors into which they have fallen upon this head, we shall find them much more excusable than the rest of the Gentiles.

Indeed, besides the extreme difficulty of preserving an idea of a deity purely spiritual, abstracted from all the testimony of the senses, we so naturally

lift up our eyes to heaven every time we think of GOD, or implore his power, that in spite of the conviction of our own minds that he must be omnipresent, in consequence of his immensity, our imagination still inclines us to regard heaven as the place of his particular residence. From this first thought, we immediately pass to a second, which is, to recognize the beauty of that abode; and to admire the light and heat, that streaming thence, enliven nature. Next, we proceed to consider the stars that glitter there; we observe several circumstances relating to them; the invariable order of their motions and courses, accompany'd with certain stated singularities, that have been taken by the ancients for the actions of a particular will, and have occasioned multitudes of men to imagine the stars inform'd or animated, or at least guided and directed by intelligences. To these primary notions, was added the experience of their effects. From hence, 'twas concluded that they had an essential power, and a particular dominion, as well over those events which depend on the temperature of the air, (such as fruitful years, the constant yet varied regularity of the four seasons, the production of certain insects, and consequently the epidemical distempers among men and other animals,) as over those, that are determined by a sort of fatality that seems to govern the world and all that it contains, not excepting kings any more than private men, who all imagine themselves agents, and that they perform voluntarily whatsoever they execute, while they are indeed necessitated, by a cause depending from the first motions

tions of nature, of which the last are likewise consequences as well as the first.

The union of all these sentiments concerning heaven, and the stars that bespangle it, failed not to produce in the minds of the first men, ill-instructed as yet in mathematic truths, a religious worship to that heaven, and those stars, the borderers on the glory of the Most High. Which worship they have practised equally from the motive of the hope of some good, or from the dread of some evil. This worship is so very antient, that the author thereof was never discover'd. So that antiquity it self was anticipated, before it had reflected upon this innovation. In the mean time we find in the holy scripture that GOD condemned the practice of it by his prophets, as soon as he was pleas'd to prescribe to men a rule of life more strict than the law of nature; fixing the true and only object of their adoration, which could be no other than himself. Moses forbids positively the worshipping the host of Heaven; from which worship truly, it is apparent, the Canaanites, and several other nations, derived abominable practices; even so far as to introduce the execrable custom of sacrificing their children to those savage and relentless gods, Moloch, and Remphan; which were only the stars Mars, and Saturn, revered in their representations or types, which were pyramidical stones consecrated to their honour. This prohibition had its influence upon the Hebrews for some years: but the example of the neighbouring nations caused them soon to relapse into this very idolatry: and nothing less than some terrible punishment, repeated accord-

ing to their backslidings, could possibly recover them from their error.

The Arabians, on their part, less exposed than the Jews to these kinds of punishment, which may rather be reputed political and national, than religious, because they were less appropriated to particular offenders, and the rectifying their conscience, than to the destruction of the commonwealth it self, which never recover'd out of its misfortunes, but by embracing with a new zeal the observation of their laws: these Arabians, I say, more tranquil in their deserts, delighted too much in the mixture of a material and objective worship, with a religion spiritual and intellectual. Their defenders have finely said, that the human imagination is incapable of fixing it self, without being determined by some material object. But they are really culpable for relying upon a precarious confidence; because tho' the stars actually were the causes of all the effects they ascribe to them, yet they can only be esteem'd mechanical causes, subordinate to the will of him who communicated to them the first motion, of which all the rest seem to be the train and consequences.

With just reason then did Mahomet, following the example of all the prophets, condemn the worship of the stars; not as a perfect prevarication relating to the corruption of the will; but as an abuse of the common notion, and universal idea of the divinity: since the order of natural things is nothing else than the execution of the will of the omnipotent. A will, neither mutable, nor occasional, but determined by an eternal decree, to which the motion of the first
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movers is as subject as the last of the things that are moved. This is one of the arguments employ'd by Mahomet to confound entirely the whole idea of association, of a concurrence of power, of foreign efficacy ; as absolutely inconsistent with the notion that must be conceived of a being, supposed to be infinite, and supremely perfect.

The antient Sabeans, or Sabians, as the Arabians call them to this day, were the people who practis'd this worship of the stars ; who spread themselves not only in the desert, where they might observe their motions more commodiously, but even into the mountains of Yaman. In the mean time, as human opinion never remains long in the simplicity of its first conception, instead of the entire host of heaven, which was at first the object of their worship, at length there was not a particular country, nor tribe, perhaps not a family, in all Arabia, that had not, out of the vast number of fixed stars, or planets, chosen some one, for the particular object of their worship ; regarding it as a special protector, from whom they might hope for assistance in their enterprises, and support and consolation in their misfortunes.

We are told that among the Arabian tribes who had chosen themselves particular deities, that of Hamyar, adored the Sun ; that of Cananah, the Moon ; that of Miffam, the Bull's eye, called in the language of the country Aldebaran ; those of Ocham and Jedam, the planet which we name Jupiter ; that of Tai, the star called Cassiope ; that of Kais, the great Dog, called Sirius ; probably in conformity to the observations made in Egypt : that of Asad, wor-

shipped the planet Mercury, so difficult to be discover'd by vulgar observations ; and the tribe of Takif, that of Venus, commonly call'd the Shepherd's star ; and so of others, which it would be too long and very useless to enumerate.

To say, after this, exactly how far they placed their faith and trust in these stars, is altogether impossible. But if we may judge by the condescension that Mahomet express'd for them, it will appear that he did not suspect them of compleat idolatry ; but rather regarded them as the least corrupted of all those whom he stiled Associators, that is, the most disposed to renounce their errors. Not but that the religion of the Jews came much nearer to his, but then their prejudices appear'd to him much harder to overcome, being chiefly personal as to their own race and name. This was the reason that the very first toleration he granted was issued in favour of the Sabians ; the second was for the Jews ; and the third for the Christians. But he found in the end, that the doctrine of the latter, tho' farthest from his own, did not commonly produce so inflexible an obstinacy, but that he might undertake to convert them in the way of reasoning ; and besides, their intestine divisions inspired him with hopes that they would destroy themselves.

The Persian Magi were not without pretences to weaken the imputation of idolatry which Mahomet had thrown upon them. They adored the natural light of spirits, in his most lively image, the Sun ; and under the most suitable symbol, material fire, which they always preserved with the purest fuel.

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Moreover, the innocence of their life, and the simplicity of their manners ought to have recommended them to this new teacher. But there was an antient prejudice against them, the orientals pretending that Abraham, on their account, was nigh being burnt to death, for refusing to embrace their worship. To which, if we add the shocking superstition of their more than barbarous interments; and that practice, incredible to every well-governed nation, which allows among them the parents to make use of their own children to beget others; it will appear, that the prophet was reasonably determined to condemn their religion; and that the accusation of idolatry was a pretence so much the more favourable to his purpose, as 'twas less liable to excite opposition.

But furthermore, the Sabians hit upon a very plausible artifice to reconcile themselves to the favour of Mahomet. He was very ready to give credit to the depositaries of the antient books of the first prophets, such as Adam, Seth, Enoch: and they boasted that they had those very books in their possession at that time. However, there is little probability that those patriarchs wrote any thing; unless we may suppose them inclined to warn posterity of the common disasters with which the universal world was threaten'd; such as the deluge, which was not far off, and the final conflagration. Such monuments of theirs Josephus asserts there were, inscribed upon columns for the information of future ages. Which, being ruined by all-devouring time, might have been collected by the first men, and committed to writing. Upon which supposition it is not impossible that the Sabians might

have been possessed of them in the time of Mahomet ; the rather, because these people were extremely curious and diligent, as history testifies. As to the book of Enoch called by the Arabians, Idrif, St. Jude bears witness to it in his canonical epistle, in which he has cited a passage from it.

In short, a certain expounder of the Alcoran, willing to justify fully Mahomet's toleration of the Sabians, has not stuck to affirm, that all the difference between the Musulman faith, and the Sabian worship, only consisted in a mistake in fact, so much the more excusable, as it could not flow from the pride and vanity, so natural to men. " They believe, says he, " that they stand in need of certain intelligences of a " middle nature, to lift them up to God, and to procure them access to his throne ; whereas the truth discovers to us that there is such a connection between " the Creator, and his reasonable creature, that the " deep humiliation and self-annihilation of the one, " naturally attracts the compassion of the other ; who " diffuses his light and grace in proportion to the faith " and good disposition, that is, the taste for truth, " which he finds in minds free to chuse either good " or evil.

Now let us proceed to the common customs of the Arabians ; upon which Mahomet seems to have formed the exterior practice of his religion. Customs, the familiarity whereof naturally recommended them to him, preferably to those of other people ; or which, the little intercourse the situation of his country allowed him with foreigners, might incline him to imagine were generally used by all other nations. Such

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was circumcision ; the like practice being ascribed to Abraham in the sacred scripture ; as order'd him by GOD in a particular vision. But all the commentators, that have examined this matter, easily agree that this custom was not peculiar to that patriarch, nor even to his line ; for 'twas the general practice throughout all the East ; and it was still earlier among the Egyptians ; who regarded it as a necessary precaution to prevent, in these hot countries, certain accidents of distemper, inconvenience, or uncleanness, of which circumcision was the effectual remedy. Philo the Jew, so zealous for his religion and the glory of the Jewish nation, whose principal title is the elect of GOD, gives no other reason for it. 'Tis true, the Greeks, after the conquest of Asia by Alexander, finding these nations had made a religious precept of a meer medicinal precaution, treated it as a childish superstition : from whence there presently arose (because they were the lords of all) a sort of shame of circumcision, which was encreased by that universal hatred of the Jews, as of an unsociable nation, full of detestable prejudices. The Romans came after the Greeks, and acted by the same principle. Nevertheless, tho' their empire lasted so long, they did not find that the Arabians forbore a custom establish'd among them, either as a precept of religion, or as conducing to the preservation of health. Moreover, Mahomet, directly descended from the children of Abraham, must needs have a particular fondness for a rite to which that renown'd patriarch had submitted in his old age, after the most deliberate reflection upon the uneasiness it would occasion him. That con-

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sideration alone would have determined him to look upon circumcision as a religious act, tho' it had not been so absolutely the practice of the whole Arabian nation; to whom 'twould have been doing violence, if he had obliged them to renounce it. It is not then to be wonder'd at, if, in such circumstances, he was determined to ordain the observation thereof to all that should embrace his doctrine.

The prohibition of eating unclean meats, is an article which has the same foundation with that of circumcision. 'Tis very easily understood, that swine could never be well fed in a country where the harvests are very small, and hardly afford subsistence to the inhabitants. Besides, all kinds of plants are so scarce in Arabia, as well those whose roots are nourished deep in the earth, as the very grass that cloaths its superficies, that we may perceive there can be no sort of nourishment proper for these animals, in such a country as this. From whence we may infer, that if any were there, they must be extremely ill-fed, and consequently the flesh of them, far from being delicious or pleasant, or serving to relish other victuals, must be exceedingly offensive to the taste, and also most perniciously unwholesome. A reason more than sufficient to authorize a custom, superstitious in thought, but natural and right in practice, as it is founded on the taste, and the inconveniences to the health of a whole nation. For no body is now ignorant, how very obnoxious these creatures are to the leprosy, which might increase, and grow inveterate for want of the proper food their nature requires, and spread from them among the other beasts, and even
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among the people that feed them. Nor is it less notorious, that the saltness of the waters and aliments of Arabia, necessarily renders the people very susceptible of cutaneous diseases ; of which this last is the very worst sort.

So that the legislator who enforced this practice by a law, forbidding to eat a sort of food naturally bad and corrupt, but to which necessity might reduce the miserable, only augmented the publick caution, and secured, by a religious motive, that very people, among whom custom and reason had already establish'd an abstinence from a sort of meat that might prove of such dangerous consequence. Other nations, who have a greater plenty of sustenance, and reflect but little upon the inconveniencies that naturally attend some countries, are shock'd at a prohibition the reason of which does not immediately occur to their imagination, and conclude that such a law must be the effect of meer caprice in the legislator. The Jews, hated of all their neighbours, were look'd upon as obstinate with regard to this abstinence from swine's flesh, which they equally practis'd in all places wherever they settled, in Greece, Egypt, or Italy. We know, that the parasites at the court of the emperor Caligula objected this as a crime to Philo, at an audience he had of that prince, to which Philo reply'd in excuse of all the Jews, that pork was insipid and flashy food ; not fearing herein to be contradicted. Had Philo been more skilful, he would have been able to have justify'd that custom with much more weighty reasons. After all, whether this practice of the Arabians concerning unclean meats, as the hog,
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the hare, reptiles, and shell-fish, had a principle drawn from experience, or whether it was only an imitation of their neighbours the Israelites, it is certain, that Mahomet found it well settled, when he thought himself called to the ministry, and the establishment of a new religion; and that he confirmed it by a law, and by his example. So that all Musulmen have received it with obedience; and without any farther reasoning upon it, than referring it to that exact cleanliness, which is so strongly inculcated upon them; and which must naturally encrease their aversion to animals so filthy as swine.

This leads us properly to speak of their purifications and washings, which have ever been in use in hot countries, and particularly in Arabia. For the heat being there extreme, and their garments ill suited to the climate, (linnen cloth being very scarce there) they are driven by necessity to the frequent use of bathing; which is the only way of procuring relief for those defilements of the body which result from perspiration itself, tho' the levity of the sand and the impetuosity of the wind should not several times a day cover with dust people who live continually in the open fields, exposed to the most violent impulses of the air. 'Tis plain, nothing but the mere scarcity of water could obstruct so commodious a refreshment; and that the Arabians therefore, must search for that, with the most quicken'd eagerness, as for a cool and comfortable remedy, fitted to assuage the boiling of their blood; and the only means of facilitating the transpiration of those gross humours with which their parched constitutions abound.

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This natural desire of the people is vigorously represented to us in the Alcoran, by that continual description that Mahomet gives of the happiness of the other world, under the different emblems of streams, fountains, and fresh shades; of bowers, where the blest are shelter'd from the burning glory of an ever-shining sun; of meadows, where they repose their heavenly limbs upon the green and fragrant herbage; of baths, that sweetly dissipate the soil contracted by daily exercise; and of the exquisite purity of those happy men who shall be no more exposed to the pollutions of this life, which may be contracted so many ways, known and unknown, that no mortal can be secure. 'Tis certainly a very odd effect of the imagination, that men should always thus hanker after those things that nature seems willing to exclude them from, while they neglect those blessings she has indulged them. Thus the Arabians, environ'd with deserts, sigh for the copious streams of Egypt, and affect the same neatness that is practis'd there. Mahomet, when he was dying, being consulted by his disciples, what was the thing of most importance in all the commandments he left them, recommended peace; and among the methods of preserving it, a constant attention to neatness, and the perpetual precaution of shutting up and separating their women.

Strange methods, say the commentators; but which, to the wise, demonstrate the superiority of his genius who said it. But what connection is there between men's jealousy of their wives, or their care of cleanliness, and the preservation of peace and repose? Attend, and understand. The separation of women as

it is practis'd over all the East, is a certain way of excluding them from state intrigues, and preventing those tempests they have too often rais'd in the world. When it shall be their gentle task among themselves, to employ their obliging care to please their husbands, then will the peace of the family be preserved by their management; as will that of the universe, when their exorbitant passions shall not foment its troubles. An equal tendency to the same purpose has neatness: when men take exact care to preserve it, lest they should be contaminated with the defilements of one or other; when this shall keep the Musulmen at a distance from those that reject these wholesome precepts, as they esteem them; there will from hence follow a separation proper to maintain peace. A separation, which will suppress a multitude of idle disputes, and dangerous dialogues, which might possibly be the occasion of uneasiness, vexation, ambition, and tumult among those that heard them. In short, which will produce that repose, and particular tranquillity, which causes a man to take more pleasure in himself, than in all his other possessions. This is that sort of neatness, so necessary to the Arabians according to their natural condition; so highly esteem'd for the great difficulty of preserving it; and which is so endear'd to them by the motives with which the Mahometan religion has inspir'd them.

The last custom of the Arabians, which Mahomet has ingrafted into his religion, is the care they have always taken to multiply the human species; not only for the conservation and perpetuity of their nation, but also to render it strong and powerful, by the number of its people. In this view they have always allow'd

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plurality of wives, without interdicting concubines, esteeming a family happy in proportion to the number of births that happen therein in the course of a year. Nevertheless, Mahomet did not think that an indefinite number of lawful wives, all equally mistresses, and equally capable of obliging a husband, was compatible with the good order and tranquillity of every household. He limited the number therefore to four wives; however, without forcing any man to that: but he extended the use of concubines as far as any man's concupiscence desir'd; not prescribing any other bounds, than the obligation of maintaining them to their satisfaction. Thus in correcting the too common misfortunes of disorder'd families, he provided, according to the genius of the Arabians, for that multiplication so much recommended by the antients; obliging moreover the women of both conditions to live retired, and in a dependance upon their masters. We may make some reflections upon this subject; which are so much the more necessary here, as our notions are very opposite to such a practice as this.

Indeed, we derive them not merely from Christianity, which hath constituted continence a virtue, by the authority of the Supreme Legislator, and by the example of the greatest antiquity that could be proposed, even that of the very first pair; but also from the custom of the most celebrated nations of the world, I mean the Greeks and Romans, from whom we have our laws, consecrated to this day, by the suffrage and approbation of so many ages. Experience itself proves, in our favour, that the countries, where plurality of wives has been adopted for the multiplication of the species, are not more populous than

than those whose inhabitants are confined to one. And though this argument may be retorted, since it may be truly said, that the rigour of the government has destroy'd more men in these countries than the multitude of women could produce ; and besides, the greatest part of their subjects are Christians, and consequently obliged to the same continence with the Europeans ; yet it certainly follows from hence, that with respect to the augmentation of the species, upon the whole, the plurality of wives has not sufficient advantage over the custom of espousing but one, to determine it to be preferable. But on the other hand, it is indubitable, that men retired, and accustomed as the Arabians were, after the example of the patriarchs, to a troublesome life, confined in a very particular region, where they could neither taste the gratifications of meer amusements, nor form any other desires than what piety, or their own benefit and repose inspired them with ; it is indubitable I say, that men in such circumstances as these, would stand in need of some consolation. And surely they could find it in nothing else but the obedience of their families ; in finding them submissive, not only to their declared will, but to the least intimation of it ; and eager to receive their favour ; which could only consist in a communication of themselves, for that of other benefits was not in use among them.

There is no body but can easily conceive, that in such a case, it must be almost impossible for the husband and the wife to dwell together all their days, in a wearisome solitude, deprived of all commerce abroad, and without any engaging employment at home.

'home. 'Twas necessary therefore, that they should multiply their families, and that they should render their habitation agreeable, to be able to support a life, destitute of intrigues, of games, of shows, of feasts, and all those other amusements to which we sacrifice ours.

After this, it would be very idle to compare the innocence or virtue of the two schemes. It is, and ought to be, undoubted, that ours is the finest in speculation, the worthiest in practice, and most adapted to promote our salvation; as it was ordained by our Great Master, and the Supreme Judge of our actions. But it does by no means follow, that 'tis the easiest custom, or most agreeable to man, or the least dangerous with respect to society. We are obliged to run, to apply, to seek, for foreign delights; to amuse ourselves with delusive objects, proper to steal from us our heaviest cares and chiefest attention. Happy, if they did not run away with all that we are capable of! In a word; our maxims are preferable, but alas! we dispense with their true consequences; and so purity and chastity offer themselves to our view, under the most delicate form, but all in vain. The maxims of the Musulmen are more plain and more natural; and they are engaged to them by a principle not different from ours, for 'tis still religion, which leads both the Christians and the Mahometans by two roads so extremely opposite one to the other.

Such was the ordinance of Mahomet, form'd with respect to the common custom of his nation, relating to the peace and satisfaction of what he calls a MAN; that is, the chief, the master, the lord of his family.

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But as to order, policy, and regulation of manners, which ought to be the object of every legislator, he was, without doubt, palpably mistaken. For the commandment of GOD exacts positively the mortification of our lust, and the absolute conquest of the sensual appetites. It might be examined, whether the prodigious force of his own constitution, which he boasted above all his contemporaries, did not contribute to determine him in these precepts, or whether, in abolishing those of Christianity, in that respect, he saw all those inconveniences which our religion is sensible of.

For the last observation upon the customs of the Arabians previous to the time of Mahomet, it remains to say something of the motive that inclined him to turn the assemblies which gather'd round the temple of Mecca as people take their places in publick markets, into a pilgrimage obligatory to all the Musulmen; who are obliged to perform it in person, or by proxy, once at least in the course of their life.

We have already seen that the notion of the sanctity of this temple was a tradition generally receiv'd in the country. A tradition so antient that they refer the origin of it to the first ages of the world, and so confirm'd, that the introduction of the idols which they placed there, could not alter it. Moreover, Mahomet was not ignorant that the antient Jewish religion had proposed a tabernacle of the covenant, and afterwards a temple at Jerusalem, as chosen places, wherein GOD had his principal seat, even exclusive of all other places in the world. He imitated with respect to Mecca, what there was no doubt but GOD had

had ordained with respect to Jerusalem. Nevertheless he seem'd to waver some time in determining the place where he should fix the worship and devotion of his new profelytes.

Infomuch that could he have hoped to master Jerusalem, apparently he would have given that the preference. But in short, fate having deliver'd into his hands the city and temple of Mecca, when he least expected it, he regarded that favour of heaven as a proof of the election that God himself had made of it; and then thought of nothing else but how to apply all those advantages that tradition and the Arabian prepossessions afforded him for the fixing there a worship, which perhaps he did not then foresee was to pass into so many other nations.



THE
L I F E
O F
MAHOMET.

BOOK II.

Containing Mahomet's genealogy, and his life down to the * first Hegira, with a particular account of the steps he took to form a new religion, to declare himself a prophet, and to make himself Monarch of Arabia.



Ahomet, or Mohammed, according to the exactest way of pronouncing his name, chosen from among an obscure people, and of a family unknown to part of his own nation ; the only son of the last of that family, and abandon'd from his infancy, by the untimely death of his nearest relatives ; deliver'd over from his tender years to the hard condition of living perpetually with a guardian addicted to the most violent exercises, or of being

* The Mahometans reckon two Hegira's ; the first happen'd in the 5th year of the mission of the prophet.

a servant to the most avaricious and narrow-soul'd merchants ; who equally refused him all kind of education ; or only employ'd him, in that precious season of his life, in the management of their equipage and their camels ; insomuch, that one might properly on his account imagine, that GOD is pleas'd sometimes to humble and confound the magnifiers of human wisdom, with an apparent folly, of which, we should never have had any notion, unless we had seen the success of events : this Mahomet is He, whom GOD the sovereign disposer of all the effects of nature and her motions, has thought fit to make use of :

First, to destroy and confound those bad Christians of the East, who laid waste religion by their disputes, and mutual animosities ; abandoning the essentials of Christianity, to addict themselves to questions, inscrutable to human curiosity, or to plunge themselves in superstition. Secondly, to overthrow all the trophies of the Greeks and Romans ; to abolish their glory ; to wrest from them the delicious countries of Syria and Egypt, which at once supported their pride, and ministr'd to their avarice and luxury ; and to deprive them likewise of the places consecrated by the abode, sermons, and miracles of the Messias ; which they had abused to the advancement of childish superstitions, and to the destruction of the true spirit of religion. Thirdly, to subjugate the Persians ; to dispoil them of those honours they had possess'd for so many ages ; and to avenge the miseries they had formerly inflicted upon the victims of their ambition. In short, to spread the knowledge of the uni-
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ty of GOD from India to Spain; and to suppress every other worship besides his own. Prodigious effects! and which correspond but ill with the notion we have imbibed of this very Mahomet: as of a vile and odious impostor, equally full of defects of body and mind; insomuch that his fits of the epilepsy, which should naturally have redoubled the horror of his person, have been improved, and employ'd to promote his imposition, and to deceive the nearest witnesses of his conduct.

A learned Englishman, struck, as I am, with the singularity of the Arabian history, has given the publick an abridgment of the reign of the first successors of Mahomet. He complains, in the preface of his second volume, that the success of his work had not answer'd the hopes he had flatter'd himself with, by reason of the general disinclination of the readers. They asked Mr. Ockley, what sort of men the Arabians of those days were? Were they all enchanted, or magicians? Was the blood of the Romans, Greeks, and Persians, all of a sudden froze in their veins? What, was there no traces left of religion or learning? In a word, did the most natural sentiments arising in mens hearts for the defence of themselves and their country, all vanish at once at the meer sight of these invincible heroes? If he had answer'd these questions by justifying historical facts with authorities which commonly render them incontestible; had he mention'd those talents which nature had heap'd upon the person of Mahomet; had he extoll'd the courage and capacity of the generals and ministers that he himself had formed; or had he represented the enthusiasm,
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and fanataciſm, with which the whole nation was univerſally poſſeſs'd, with reſpect to a religion, which they believ'd to be the moſt antient, which they found to be the moſt ſimple or intelligible, and which was renewed at a time wherein Chriſtianity was no longer underſtood even by its own profeſſors ; they would immediately have retorted upon him the notion of a palpable impoſture, contrived by an infamous man, ſupported by certain fortunate ſucceſſes, in defiance of all the natural defects of its author, in ſpight of his being trained in ſervitude, and notwithstanding the attacks of an habitual epilepsy itſelf, ſufficient to ſtupify a perſon of the ſublimeſt ſenſe and courage.

To ſuch objections as theſe, Mr. Ockley might have reply'd ; that ſuppoſing the truth of the facts in conteſted, and in conteſtable, according to the ſpirit of demonſtration peculiar to the hiſtory he follow'd, either the natural talents of the contrivers of ſuch an impoſture facilitated its ſucceſs ; or elſe Supreme Providence diſpoſed things thus in a miraculous way. A conſequence ſo contrary to the wiſe and juſt conduct eſſential to the Deity, that all the force that can be aſcribed to particular junctures of time, and the natural diſpoſitions of things, to produce ſuch events, is certainly rather to be granted, than to have recourſe to the power of miracles, exerted for the authoriſing a falſhood. However, theſe publick diſcourſes, made ſo deep an impreſſion upon Mr. Ockley's mind, who was a clergyman, that he did not think proper to undertake the particular life of Mahomet ; referring to that compiled by Dr. Prideaux ; who, tho' a very judi-

cious historian, has thought fit to adhere to the common notion, that makes of this false prophet, an impostor as ignorant as contemptible; and imagines he used no other artifice to seduce his disciples, but to permit them a plurality of wives; and to promise them a paradise where they should enjoy them in abundance. But to speak naturally and truly of such a fiction, the ground whereof we have seen in the preceding book, it discovers a very slender knowledge of men, or rather, 'tis to ascribe too little to the springs of human nature, to imagine that the sole passion of incontinence could produce an effect so grand and so permanent as the Mahometan worship.

Let it be, that we make Christian heroism to consist at this day in an abstinence from pleasure, and even in corporal sufferings; let it be, that we place the essence of penitence, not in the change of the mind and heart, but in the smart and affliction of the members of the body, which being endued with sensation, necessarily desires pleasure, for the same reason that it fears pain; it will still be true that the permission or hope of using with discretion that sort of pleasure, neither is, nor ever could be the proper cause of a general revolution throughout all the world upon a religious account. The intention of propagating an agreeable doctrine, never transported any body with enthusiasm. On the contrary, their estimation and passionate desires, centre upon the intellectual love of an invisible object: a zeal to procure him some sort of new adoration, an ardour to combat tenets that they thought erroneous, and above all

all an imagination heated with rapid ideas, which the vulgar take for unknown objects, are the real sources of those religious movements, that have often shook the constitution of the world, and even of the leaders of those Arabians of whom we speak.

Indeed, there was a necessity of persuading them, and, if I may so speak, to intoxicate them with doctrine ; to engage them by hope and by fear ; to flatter them with a notion of an early faith once committed to the wisdom of their ancestors, to be convey'd to their posterity ; but which the cares of life, and the natural avocations of men, have often occasion'd to escape their memory, so that 'twas necessary the goodness of GOD should raise up particular messengers, from time to time, to reduce frail mortals, so apt to wander from the simple paths of truth. They were chiefly to be convinced of the special vocation of Mahomet for this very purpose, which was not very difficult in that conjuncture.

At that very time the Ethiopians and the Persians (the former Christians and the other Magians) had invaded different parts of Arabia, while the Greeks or the Romans labour'd at the same attempt on another side ; and the Jews, as we have said before, were dispersed all thro' the heart of the country. Now all these different people equally exerted themselves to introduce their own religion into Arabia ; which had a manifest tendency to destroy the antient traditions, and the notions commonly received. Mahomet, who undertook their defence, and knew how to preserve them, by weaving them together with se-

veral Jewish and Christian doctrines, into his new system, united their minds much better than any other particular sect could possibly do.

But can we easily believe, that thus prevalently to persuade a whole nation, animated throughout with a valour that so swiftly conquer'd a great part of the world, was, or could be, the work of a man destitute of every talent but artifice, the whole effort of which was only permitting a plurality of wives? Is it not more likely, that this permission, and the hope he inspired his followers with, of enjoying others after the resurrection, was either the effect of his own particular prepossession in favour of the fair sex, or the consequence of that regard which every wise legislator must have for particular and popular customs that do not interfere with the law of nature.

'Tis difficult to imagine how many men are unjust in the animosity and passion with which they condemn whatever contradicts their prejudices; and in their zeal for supporting customs whose whole merit and esteem is oftentimes grounded on nothing else but the familiarity of their practice. To judge from our general constitution, it should seem that our thoughts and our opinions ought to be always alike, in all nations. We have all but one way of acquiring knowledge, which is the perception of objects, join'd with a faculty every mind is endued with, of comparing its ideas, of dividing them, and compounding them at pleasure. Again, forasmuch as objects are nearly the same in all parts of the world, and the natural appetites are the consequences of the common organization of mankind, from hence there should result a
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like sensation from the presence of the same objects in all men ; were it not still more true, that all sensation being no more than a passive affection of the perceptive substance, it can never become an active universal power, whose effect we may suppose to be constantly alike. Hence it comes to pass, that we find the same object does not always make the same impression upon our own selves ; and that we are differently affected according to the disposition we are in : not to mention our uncertainty of the perceptions of others, who may have quite different ideas from ours, of colours, sounds, and tastes, and yet agree with us in their way of expressing them. It follows from all this, that our personal ideas, commonly, have neither relation nor connection, with those of other people, only so far as we have them from imitation : which alone happens in communities, where the use of the same language occasions our adopting reciprocally passions and sentiments which we should never have felt, if we had been deprived of examples. But this mechanical influence, which makes children laugh or cry at the will of their nurses, is common to all the three stages of human life. This presents us with a sensible but sad image of the weakness of our constitution ; which, from the defect of our own sentiments, subjects us to those of others. Nevertheless, it appears from this observation, that the notions removed or separated by the diversity of language are not exposed to this reciprocal imitation of ideas, dispositions, and passions : so that having only the first common perceptions, they are respectively ignorant of the conclusions that each may draw from them ;

which conclusions, variously combined and compounded, produce sensations, manners, and customs as different as their several habits, or the lines of their countenance.

Let us not then be surprized, we, who have received a supernatural revelation to direct our understanding, our faith, and our justice, (a revelation proposed as the only remedy for the corruption of nature, and that ignorance wherein sin had plunged us) to find at the other end of the world the Chinese ; who, deprived of that assistance, only understand what they see, and, unable to reason upon any thing but sensible objects, impute to the power of matter all the effects that we ascribe to a spiritual substance, of which they disbelieve the existence and possibility. They are blind, and perhaps opinionated ; but they have been so for four or five thousand years : and their ignorance or obstinacy has not bereaved their political government of any of those wonderful advantages that a reasonable man might hope, and naturally derive from society ; as conveniences, plenty, the exercise of useful arts, learning, tranquillity, and security. For the same reason let us not prejudice ourselves against the Arabians, at half the distance of the former ; who, more enlighten'd than they, (in consequence of the antient institution of their fathers, which has deliver'd down to them the knowledge of the one GOD, essentially perfect, infinite in power, the bountiful Creator of every thing that exists but himself, the just rewarder of good and evil, and who expects the fear and love of all those who are capable of knowing him) but likewise more diffident than

than we, with respect to the progress of credulity under the mask of piety, are not disposed to confound a tenet so magnificent and true, with the meer opinions of doctors.

They never imagin'd that the anguish of nature, and a continual deprivation of pleasure was the proper homage of a creature to its author, who might easily have deny'd it agreeable sensations, if he condemn'd the use of them. Neither did they think the prophets (the necessity of whose mission they acknowledge, as we observ'd above, to revive those intellectual notions which worldly distractions and occupations so easily dissipate) were sent to teach doctrines new or mysterious, or liable to disputation. They admitted not of different oeconomies in the manifestation of the wisdom of GOD. In short, they will have it, that what is demonstrated to be true to-day, has been so from the beginning of the world; and that the duties of the faithful are unchangeable.

Here are principles, both on one side and the other, very wide of ours; in which we may observe, the progress of human reasoning, left to itself, unassisted with a full revelation. The Arabians, who are situated in the middle between the Chinese and us, lay their foundations, as we have seen, upon the patriarchal traditions, which seem to have deliver'd down to them memoirs of the creation of the world, of the deluge, and of several other events of the first ages, which contribute to establish the belief of an invisible GOD, and a dread of his judgments. But this history imposes no particular moral rule relating

to chastity, or the mortification of the senses. It is only applicable to impartial justice, without which there could be no society; neither does it afford any intellectual knowledge, except the bare belief of the existence of angels, the particular ministers of GOD's will, of whose condition and nature however, they are ignorant. These notions, compared with those which we hold concerning grace, and revelation, or with the just and necessary consequences that the greatest divines have drawn therefrom, would appear to us but as meer atoms of knowledge. Nevertheless, 'tis not to be concluded from hence, that to rouse up men, imbued with these opinions, Mahomet had nothing else to do, but to loosen the reins to their lust in this life, and to promise them perpetual virgins in the life everlasting. This reasoning is evidently false, because it supposes, that before the mission of this pretended prophet, plurality of wives was unknown in Arabia; and that it was not the universal practice over all the East: which is contrary to truth, and the most certain notoriety of fact.

Return we now to our assertion, that every nation has its customs, consecrated by use; and that they are independant of the notions, and different practices, that other people have upon the same subject. So that each of them being persuaded they adhered to the best consequences they could draw from the principles they knew, have settled that religion, those political laws, and that form of government, which are peculiar to them. And thus the Chinese, within a certain extent of knowledge; the Arabians, in another;

ther; and the Christians according to the perfect light of revelation; every one of them, on their part, could not draw better conclusions from their premises than those which they have follow'd. This reason should determine us, 1st, To respect mutually the customs of every country. 2dly, To desire the instruction of those who err in the sincerity of their hearts. 3dly, To pity those over whom the power of prejudice prevails above the brightness of that light they might obtain. 4thly, Not to invent false principles to slander events that are contrary to our notions, and which we would not have to be true. 5thly, To acknowledge, as to Mahomet himself, that whoever could project such mighty schemes, and execute them so successfully, as well in religion as politicks, could never be a person despicable for his natural defects. Common sense leads us to judge, on the contrary, that if he was an impostor he must have possess'd still more superior qualities to enable him to impose upon his contemporaries, to draw them into his sentiments, and to captivate them; and that his fraud has always had the appearance of truth, at least, with respect to those that he seduced. Whereas by divesting him arbitrarily of those abilities which might naturally conduce to his successes, solely to gratify a disposition to hatred, which 'tis true, every Christian might justly conceive against the greatest enemy to his religion, (tho' at the bottom those qualities or talents in no wise affect Christianity, since it only concerns a dead man, who has been so, above a thousand years) yet it must be acknowledg'd that such a revenge reduces our reasoning to an absurdity. Since, if the fortune of this

personage was not the effect of natural means, the success could be only from GOD; whom the impious will accuse of having led half the world into an error, and destroy'd violently his own revelation.

This Mahomet, for whose birth, it seems, according to the Arabian writers, that whole nation was prepared; who was ardently expected for many ages; (according to the etymology of his name, which signifies the desire of the people;) and who was to be the relief and consolation of his country, according to another interpretation; was born at Mecca in the year of our Lord 571, in the 42d of the reign of Cosroes king of Persia, before-mentioned, the son of Cabades the Manichee: Amrou, the son of Hend, reigned then over the Arabians of Gasswan; (but he reigned for eight months only;) and 'tis reckoned thro' all Asia the year 881 from the victory of Alexander over Darius at Arbela. An epocha, fixed by Elmacinus, but which better agrees to the *Æra* of the Seleucides, or death of Alexander, than his victory. This birth happen'd at morning dawn, on Monday the 8th day of the month, called the former Rabbia, which exactly corresponds to the 9th of April, of the same year of our Lord 571. But altho' Mahomet himself acknowledges that he lived among his people from his birth 'till he was 40 years of age, without any particular distinction, and consequently without any supernatural gift that might awaken their attention; yet the zeal of devout people, led by fancy and passion, and never pleas'd with the simplicity of the common course of things, has not been able

to forbear imagining many circumstances, which they pretend signalized his birth, and declared it to heaven and earth.

Amena, the mother of Mahomet, had been a widow two months, when she brought him into the world; so that Abdol-Motallab, his grandfather, by his father's side, was obliged to take care of the child and his mother, and to support their poverty; their whole estate consisting only in a few beasts, which subsisted the family. A nurse was provided for the infant, whose name was Halimah, a native of Saad, living in the desert; where he was brought up till he was 6 years old, when she returned him to his mother. But before we proceed any farther in this relation, 'tis necessary to declare the family of this illustrious infant; not so much to trace his origin, as for the illustration of the history, that from the different degrees of his affinity and consanguinity, we may better discover the motives that have occasioned the preferments of several personages both in his life-time, and after his death.

'Tis certain, Mahomet was of the tribe of Korais, lord proprietor of the city of Mecca, and guardian of the temple. In this tribe the descendants of Hashem were distinguished as a particular race, consecrated to piety; and among these descendants, the antient Abdol-Motallab, the father of twelve sons; all animated with a particular zeal for the glory and honour of the holy house. Abdollah the father of Mahomet, was the youngest of those twelve sons, and was consecrated from his birth by a name which signifies especially the service of GOD; which

induced him all his life to apply himself to the ministry of the Kaaba, without taking any notice nevertheless of its abuse by the idols that prophaned it. Amena, his mother, had no other object of her devotion. And this afterwards gave their son a very sensible sorrow; when being arrived at the knowledge of the truth, and meditating on the error of those who had given him life, (which made him doubtful of their salvation) he could not be comforted till he had shed a torrent of tears upon their sepulchres. But 'tis observed, that he was more melted at the remembrance of his mother, whom he had known in his childhood, than for his father whom he lost before he was born. Moreover, 'tis pretended that the reputation of Abdol-Motallab was so great in the province of the Hagias, and that the popular expectations of the approaching events were so strong, that upon the rumour thereof, spread thro' the country by certain Jews, a queen of Syria (which could only be some princess of Gasswan in alliance with Rome) requested affinity with him; and made him advantageous offers, both for his own person, and for that son of his, whom he should bestow upon her for a husband. But the good old man, who had but little relish of pomp and ambition, preferr'd his desert, and the innocence of a rural life, to all the allurements of a sublimer fortune. He thought, if the decrees of GOD had determined any thing in favour of his family, he should less deserve the completion of it by changing his course of life, than by persevering in a conduct that must needs have been acceptable, since GOD was pleased to reward it. So he

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he resolved not to depart from his accustom'd simplicity; and married the last of his sons to Amena, the daughter of Waheb, one of the sons of his grandfather Abdomenaph.

The celebrated Nouschirvan, king of Persia, being at that time come into Yaman to settle the peace of the inhabitants, was desirous of seeing this venerable old man, being above 100 years of age; and to receive from his own mouth, the counsels he believed him capable of communicating, for the prosperity of the Arabian nation. Abdol-Motallab accepted his invitation, and undertook a long journey to meet that prince, from a desire on his part to see a monarch so renowned for his wisdom and integrity. He presented him with some excellent horses; and 'tis said, he refused the gold that the Persian offer'd him in return. But some of his sons, dazzled with the splendour of a magnificent court, would have been tempted to stay there, had not their father diverted them from it, by representing to them the advantages of that liberty they were going to sacrifice either to vain hopes, or even in case of success, to the certain inquietudes inseparable from a court life.

But while the prince and the antient were thus conferring upon the means of establishing the prosperity of the country, what would they both have said or thought, if the book of destiny had been spread before them, and they had discovered the approaching period of the Persian empire, whose destruction was soon to be effected by the youngest shoot of this old Arabian, of whom, probably the young courtiers made little account.

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But let us proceed to the certain and acknowledg'd genealogy of this famous prophet, the destroyer of so many kingdoms and empires, of whom, tho' the origin were doubtful, yet is there no man but would derive as great a glory by being sprung from his blood, as from that of Alexander, or the Cæsars.

He descended in a direct line from the patriarch Abraham, known by the Christians as well as the Arabians and Jews to be the father of two nations, chosen by Providence for different purposes : and this descent was by Ismael, who altho' the son of his maid-servant, has preserv'd and enjoy'd the advantage of primogeniture, and transmitted it to his posterity. Kedar was the son of Ismael, as is confessed by the generations recorded in the Holy Scripture, and there is no question but he communicated his name to the greatest part of Arabia the stony, as the book of the Psalms testifies. Kedar was the father of Hamal ; and he of Nobet. The son of Nobet was Salaman, the father of Homaifa, from whom sprung Alyasa, who became father to Odad, who was the father of Odd, who begat Adnan, celebrated for his singular beauty, or as the Arabians express it, for the excellent structure of his body. In his time the Arabian nation fixed the rule to be observ'd for the conservation of their genealogies, in order to preserve the distinction of their tribes and families. This space contains eleven generations from Abraham to Adnan. The second space contains ten down to Pher, called Koraiish, who was the root of a particular tribe. Adnan was the father of Moad, a warrior, a declared enemy to the Jews, whom he subjected, as

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we find in the book of Judges, where the servitude of the people of Israel to the Madianites is recorded. He was the father of Nizar, another warrior, whose standard is still preserved in the temple of Mecca, which has been esteem'd the principal sanctuary of Arabia from those very times, and the place of security for all publick deposits. Nizar became father to Modhar ; who begat Elias, the father of Medrika ; who was father to Chazaima ; from whom sprung Kenana, the father of Nodhar ; whose son Malec revived in his family the prophetick light, which render'd him very famous all his life : he was contemporary with Jehosaphat, king of Judah.

As to the prophetic light, 'tis proper we should give some account of it, for the understanding of what is to follow, and because the Musulmen have a particular veneration for it. They explain its nature and properties thus ; they say 'tis an inward witness, which constantly reclaims a man to the more perfect use of his reason ; by which means he acquires a habit of prudence and sagacity, that oftentimes discovers futurities, and even the bottom of the hearts of those that converse with him. They pretend, that this light was communicated to Adam after his repentance ; and has since been imparted not only to all the prophets, but also to many wise and brave men, who have render'd themselves praise-worthy for their piety. Finally, they add, that tho' it must be distinguished from the gift of prophecy, inasmuch as that consists properly in an extraordinary mission to declare to men some antient truths that they have forgotten or neglected ; (in which sense they hold Mahomet

homet was a prophet, and will be the last ;) yet this prophetic light will never be totally extinguish'd among men, that they may never want some eminent lights for the correction of their manners. The mischief is, that after all these fine elogiums upon the prophetic light, the vulgar believe it imparted to those that are mad ; pretending that because of the alienation of their mind, they are, by means of a less prejudic'd enthusiasm, more fitted to penetrate into hidden things than those who have the use of their reason.

After this necessary digression, let us resume the genealogy that we brokē off at the person of Malec, the father of Pher, surnam'd Koraisih, from whom the whole tribe of the Korashites took their name, and received the lordship of the city of Mecca, and the custody of the temple, which was preserved to them by Mahomet. The ten generations counted from Adnan, end in the person of Pher. There are likewise ten more reckon'd from this Pher down to Abdol-Motallab, the grandfather of Mahomet. But as these are perplex'd with more descents, and from different branches, the explication whereof is absolutely necessary for understanding the kindred of the prophet, we must enter into a more particular and extended account than the foregoing.

Pher was father to Galeb, dignify'd with the title of king in the chemical works he has left, and which are in great reputation, since they have been put into our hands by a translation into the vulgar tongue. Galeb was the father of Lawa, and he, of Kaab, in whose person the genealogy begins to be divided.

Amrou,

Amrou, one of his sons, was the root from whence, in the fourth generation, sprung Abu-Beker, surnamed the Just, father-in-law to Mahomet, and the first caliph ; another son of the same Kaab was Ada, from whom, in the eighth generation, arose Omar and Zeid, both sons of Alchattab. Omar, after he had been a long while the enemy of the prophet became his support, and most illustrious protector ; since he was the instrument and author of the most important conquests of the Musulmen. Another son of Kaab was Morrah, father to Chelab, whose son Cosa afforded likewise two branches. Out of that, which sprung from Abdolazi, issued, in the fifth generation, Obeidollah and Abdollah, the sons of Zobair, two of the most renowned chiefs of the first Musulmen : Abdomenaph the source of the second branch, but who had the right of primogeniture, produced on his side three branches, that of Waheb, the father of Amena, the mother of the prophet ; that of Abdoschems, which yielded two others, namely, Rebiah, the father of two daughters, Arwi, the mother of caliph Othman, and Hinda, the mother of caliph Moawiah ; and that of Omiah the father of Abulas and of Haleb ; the former of whom begat Afan, the father of caliph Othman, and the second produced Abu-Sophian, the father of caliph Moawiah, the chief of the Ommiades, and the merciless destroyer of the family of the prophet.

Hassem, the eldest of the children of Abdomenaph, and from whom the family of Mahomet took its distinction, had two branches ; that of Ased, from whom proceeded Phatima, the mother of Ali, the
fourth

fourth caliph, and son in law to Mahomet; and that of Abdol-Motallab, who is that celebrated old man before mentioned, who was father to twelve sons. 'Tis pretended that this Hashem enjoyed the prophetic light, which, after a long interruption, was revived in his family. 'Tis also said, that he condemned the worship of idols, but that he had not authority sufficient to destroy them; that great work being moreover reserved for his posterity. But 'tis very certain, that he distinguished himself among his contemporaries by a solid piety, and the exercise of many virtues, of all which his generosity and hospitality gained him the most love and esteem. The caliphs of the house of Abbas, who at length destroyed the Omniad usurpers, thought it so great an honour to spring from this virtuous Arabian, that when Abbulabas-Saffah possessed the empire, it having been his first work to raise a stately city (which he built upon the bank of the Euphrates, and where he had resolved to make his residence, and to declare be the metropolis of the Musulman monarchy) he called it Hashemiah, from the name of Hasham, who was his grandfather, as well as Mahomet's; being desirous in some sort to supply the want of a direct descent, and to mark the right that his proximity to the prophet gave him to the empire of the Musulmen, and to the supreme ministry of the religion: while the true descendants of Mahomet were wholly taken up with the practice of piety, and being removed from the vanities of the world, dreamt neither of empire, nor riches, nor of any thing that commonly diverts men from the great affair of their salvation. The duration of Hashem's life is not known,

known, nor when he died; but 'tis certain he left such a number of sons, that they formed a sort of division in the tribe of the Korashites, as well with respect to their great number, as to the reason of their particular opinions concerning religion; because many of them rejected and condemned idols, and others approved them, in consequence of their antient custom.

Abdol-Motallab, eldest of the children of Hashem, had * twelve sons, as I have already remark'd; the first was named Abu-Taleb; the second Hareth; the third Al-Gidack; the fourth Dorar; the fifth Abu-Lahab, who was the avowed enemy of the prophet; the sixth Abu-Jabel; the seventh Abdolkaaba; the eighth Ketham; the ninth Abbas, from whom issued all the caliphs Abassides; the tenth was Hamzah, one of the first converts to the Musulman faith, and who was honour'd with the custody of the standard of the prophet, in the first war that he sustained against the Korashites; the eleventh Zobair, the father of Abdollah, the tenth caliph, and the sworn enemy of the Omniades, who was slain in the defence of the temple of Mecca; the twelfth and last was Abdollah, the father of the prophet, as we have said be-

* Dr. Prideaux reckons thirteen of them, and says that the father of Mahomet was the eldest: as appears from the enumeration which he has drawn up of them, and which I thought proper here to insert. "He (Abdol-Motallab) had thirteen sons, whose names were Abdollah, Hamza, Al-Abbas, Abutaleb, Abulahab, Al-Gidack, Al-Hareth, Jahel, Almokawam, Dorar, Al-Zobair, Ketham, and Abdolkaaba. The eldest of all these Abdollah having married Amena, was, by her, the father of Mahomet, &c." See the Life of MAHOMET by Dr. PRIDEAUX in French at Amsterdam, 1693. page 6.

fore. So the compleat genealogy of the prophet consists of thirty-one generations from Abraham to himself.

Abdol-Motallab died in the year of our LORD 581, the 11th of the age of the prophet, and four years after Nouschirvan king of Persia, being one hundred and twelve years old: and as he had imitated the conduct and life of the antient patriarchs, so he ended his course, after their example, by dispensing his benediction to all his sons, in expressions which shew that he adjusted his wishes to the merit of their conduct, and in some sort to future events; which so heighten'd the singularity, as to cause it to be regarded as a kind of prophecy of what should befall his family. He wish'd to Hareth, his second son, the possession of pastures, and the most fertile mountains, which alludes, in the eastern manner, to the signification of his name Hareth. He wish'd riches to Abu-Jahel, and that they might never harden his heart. He said of Abbas, that he should be king of his brethren: a promise that was accomplish'd in his posterity, who possess'd the caliphate for near five hundred years. He promised to Ketham, the success of the commerce he should carry on in the land of Oman. He warned Hamzah of the peril of war; and indeed he perish'd thereby. He promised a flourishing fortune to Zobair, and charged him to beware of the corruption of avarice. Upon this, 'tis observed by the historian, that Zobair's son Abdollah being rais'd to the caliphate by the unanimous consent of all the provinces of Arabia, had only his avarice that obstructed his fortune; so that from thence arose a proverb, which

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runs thus, There never was a brave man but was also liberal, till Abdollah the son of Zobair. The eldest son's portion still remains, who was Abu-Taleb, a man of spirit and impetuosity, a lover of horses, of the chace, and of all violent exercises. 'Twas to him that Abdol-Motallab committed the treasure of his family, Mahomet, an only child, and the orphan of the last of his sons : and he admonished him, that in case he neglected him, GOD himself would take care of him. He chiefly recommended to him moderation and temperance, as necessary virtues to perfect those he already possess'd. This said, he expir'd : and history has not collected what he declared to the rest of his sons ; whether it be that they were absent, or whether they had died before him, as Abdollah, the father of Mahomet.

Let us now return to the infant, whom we left in the hands of his nurse Halimah, and transported from the place of his nativity, in order to be reared after the manner of other children. His mother Amena lived in sorrow for the loss of her husband, and in hope that providence would protect the son he had left her. On this occasion, latter historians, more devout than skilful in antiquity, or at least very fruitful in pious suppositions, have imagined that this afflicted widow had so many miraculous testimonies of the future grandeur of her son, that she must necessarily know he was destin'd to change the state of Arabia, and of the whole world ; to re-establish the true worship of the Deity ; and to enlighten all men by his instructions, and by the revival of laws, that had been forgotten for so many ages. In short, with a foolish

foolish rashness, they pretend, that as his nurse carried him home, the trees and stones saluted this infant all the way, by various kinds of motions: the trees bow'd down their branches; the rocks were moved, and rent from top to bottom, to testify their respects to him. But after all these invented prodigies, which, tho' destitute of probability, are reported by so many authors, and so generally believed by the Musulmen, that 'twas necessary they should be particularly mention'd; they all agree, that the education of Mahomet at his nurse's house was extremely hardy.

The history of his life informs us expressly, that as soon as he was able to walk, he was sent, stark naked, with the other children of the place to tend the common cattle of the village, carrying with him the little sustenance he might stand in need of for several days. 'Tis justly inferred from hence, that he lay and lived in the open air, like the other children, without any distinction, according to the usual practice in Arabia; where they accustom them from that tender age to bear the heat upon the ground, and to be satisfied with a very slender diet. Now, one day, when the child was at the pasture of the flocks, being about four or five years old, Halimah sleeping upon her matt in her common hutt, dream'd that two strangers having seized upon little Mahomet, had ript up his belly and tore out his heart. She was terribly frighten'd and troubled. But having recover'd herself, as it might be only a chimera of drowsy fancy, she thought no more of it; when next day, she learnt from the flight of some children, returned from the flocks full of terror, that something very extraordinary had hap-

happened to Mahomet. This news obliged her to go thither the day following herself; where she found the little boy in good health. In the mean time she was told by the men who kept the flocks and the children who remained behind, that Mahomet had indeed been carried away by two unknown persons, into a neighbouring mountain; and that the children who followed him afar off, saw his belly open'd with a shining knife, like as of fire, which so terrify'd them, that some flew home to the village, and others got back to the flocks with all possible speed. She then question'd Mahomet himself upon what had befallen him, and with great difficulty, (for he was desirous of concealing all) she learnt from him, that the men who carried him away, told him they were angels sent to take out of him that root of evil which every man brings with him into the world: that they immediately laid him on his back, ript open his breast with a knife of fire, and having taken out his heart, one of them squeez'd it till it discharg'd certain black drops; that afterwards they wash'd it in snow, and weigh'd it in a ballance, first against ten other hearts, and then against an hundred, and still it was heaviest. This done, they put his heart into its proper place again, and having closed up his breast, they set him upright upon his feet. That he thought he slept all the while, tho' he saw what they did, heard their words, and answer'd them when they spoke to him. That being set up again upon his feet, one of the angels shew'd him heaven and earth, and said unto him, Behold! there is one only GOD who has made all these things, wilt thou not love and obey him?

him? That after this they sent him back again to the flock, charged him not to tell what had passed, and every day to think upon GOD when he beheld heaven or earth.

The nurse, extremely affected with this strange relation, and apprehensive of the consequences, soon after carried back the child to his mother. Amena thought proper to inform Abdol-Motallab of what had befallen little Mahomet. He gave her very express orders not to declare this secret to any one; and bade her expect with patience the accomplishment of the decrees of the Almighty. This certainly had been the wisest and most convenient conduct. But a mother's vanity is not always restrained by prudent considerations. Amena unluckily published this story, which was treated by the Korashites as an extravagant fiction; or rather as an attempt of the Hashemites to prepare the way for those alterations which they were desirous of introducing into the publick religion. As for Amena, her indiscretion was punished with a sudden death, which carried her off in the sixth year of her son's age. That young orphan was immediately carried to his grandfather, in whose house he dwelt till his death, and then was sent to his uncle Abu-Taleb, who was entrusted with the care and education of him by the last testament of Abdol-Motallab.

I have already observed, that there are but few circumstances come down to us of the earlier years of Mahomet's youth; and that there is no depending upon the historians after his time, whose too ardent devotion overflowed in fiction; examples of which
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are but too common among ourselves, even in the bosom of truth. 'Tis very likely the active disposition of his uncle would only suffer him to be occupied in those things, that possess'd himself so entirely as to constitute all his satisfaction and delight. Such was a sort of military life he led in the midst of peace; enuring himself continually to manage the horses which he had bred and broke himself; to bend the bow; to exercise the sabre, by signalizing his artful dexterity, or dispensing strokes of marvellous force. But his principal employment was the chase, which he prosecuted indefatigably, in the mountains of Naged and Yaman, against the fiercest savages, lyons and tygers, whom he chose to attack when their native fury was most enflamed, imagining that in the time of the greatest heats they had least strength, by reason of the general failure of water.

'Twas to this school that Mahomet was first consigned by providence; and not to the study of eloquence, which was of so much use to him in the remaining parts of his life. It was heaven's high will, say the Arabian writers, to institute him by degrees; and by this needful instruction, to invest him with talents that could not possibly be acquired but by a long and constant practice: among which those that consist in strength and dexterity, are never carried to perfection; but by being trained to them from the most tender years. 'Tis also acknowledged, that this education procured Mahomet the greater part of the constitutional excellencies of his body; as those of his mind were derived to him from his travels. The chief of which to be here observed, were an indefatigable vigour,

a strength capable of sustaining equally heat, hunger or thirst; and of living, on necessary occasions, without sleep; a great skill in horses and camels, even to curing their distempers; a wonderful dexterity in ruling and riding them, as well as in shooting of arrows, and in the use of the sabre. In short, he understood all the stratagems of the most hazardous chases, which he had been engaged in by following his uncle. All this knowledge and practice being ripen'd, and united to that which he acquired in his travels, render'd him the chief captain of his nation; and capacitated him to form those generals that were qualified to conquer all the world. Other authors say, that this education did indeed prepare him for learning the art of war, but that he was perfected in it only by the actual use he made of it. They add, that if he was yet but a scholar in that, he became a master of a much more important art, of a very different kind, which was that of knowing how to chuse the most proper means to arrive at the end he propos'd. A talent which his contemporary authors tell us he possess'd beyond all men living, and which his vast successes incline us to think very justly ascribed to him.

At twenty years of age this young man, press'd by his wants, and under a necessity of providing himself an independant subsistence, became concerned in the caravans which trade from Mecca to Damascus, in which many of his near relations were engaged, and from whence he flatter'd himself with the hopes of sharing the common profits of the returns. But we are told, that as providence resolv'd to form in him some other qualities, as necessary to heroes as courage, namely

namely firmness of mind, and patience in adverse accidents, it permitted him not to derive any lucrative advantages from the several journeys he undertook. The severity and avarice of the governor of Damascus, who imposed arbitrary duties upon the coming in and carrying out of the several commodities, extended even to the Arabians of Gasswan and Mecca, on whom he likewise exercised those oppressions. These vexations obliged Mahomet to try his fortune in other cities; as to Balbeck, antiently called Heliopolis, to Elia, which once was Jerusalem, and in divers other places. But he met every where with the same spirit of government; the same greediness to deprive the merchants of a lawful gain, the reasonable reward of all their toil. So that he always returned into his own country full of indignation at the injustice of the Christians. Nevertheless, there happened to him in one of his journeys, an adventure capable of raising his hopes, if he would have regarded it as an omen of his future elevation. The caravan he went with commonly pass'd in the neighbourhood of a monastery, or, as the Greeks call it, a *laura*, which stood in the desert of Bosra, not far from mount Sinai; and the religious allege that to be the place where the manna first fell, that fed so long the wandering Israelites. The monks of this solitude, living under the government of an abbot, were wont to supply the passengers with refreshments, for their money; and both sides found their account in it. This practice yielded an opportunity, one day, to Mahomet, to accompany thither the chief persons of the caravan, who were going to market there: and tho' he was

obliged to remain at the gate, to take care of the camels that were to carry back to their camp the provisions they should purchase, yet the superior of that house took so much notice of him, that at the return of the caravan, not seeing the same young man, who chanced to stay behind in the camp, he inquired, whether he was gone on farther; and being inform'd that he was with the bulk of the caravan, he desired to see him again. Mahomet went thither accordingly, upon the abbot's invitation, who, at sight of him, immediately saluted him with the profoundest respect; and afterwards told his attendants, who were surpriz'd at the veneration he had testified for this young merchant, that he had paid it to a man who should one day be the prince of the Arabian nation. And then addressing himself to Mahomet, he recommended to his protection the religious recluses in general, and those of that house in particular, beseeching him to remember this in the days of his exaltation. 'Tis said Mahomet received all this submission with as little perplexity as if he had already been the monarch of Arabia, and reply'd with a smile, I always loved the recluses who meddle with nothing but their mats and their baskets, alluding to the common employment of the monks of those times. But the abbot, after Mahomet was gone, affirmed to the other Arabians, that he saw a radiant light environ his head with beaming glory, which he look'd upon as a sure presage of the sublimity of his fortune.

Probably this story occasion'd the vulgar supposition of a concerted plot between Mahomet and Sergius the monk; which asserts, that the latter taught

taught him the means of reforming the religion of his country, and of adapting it more to credibility, and the general taste of the people, by drawing the morality of it from Judaism and Christianity, and at the same time rejecting whatever he found in the one or the other very repugnant to the natural inclinations of men with respect to pleasure and the use of women. 'Tis farther pretended, that he instructed him to take advantage of his epilepsy, and to make the world believe that it was only the effect of a sort of rapture and extasy; during which time a pigeon, taught to come and peck some grains of rice out of his ear, was to induce people to think that he then received by the ministry of an angel, the several articles of the Alcoran, which he afterwards promulgated to the world, but which were indeed sent him privately by this apostate monk, after he had drawn them up according to the requirements of the circumstances of the present times and affairs.

But really this tale is so ill invented, and is so very opposite to probability, and even the possibility of the success of such an artifice, employ'd to impose upon a nation so ingenious and sagacious as the Arabians, that what quarter soever it comes from, 'tis absolutely impossible to give any credit to it, by reason of the small regard therein preserved for the character of the people on whom the illusion was to be practis'd, and also of the man, to whom it imputes the use of such wretched means for effecting an end so delicate and important.

Let us rather say, that this adventure was perhaps the ground of that compassion that Mahomet always

had for the monks and recluses; while, with the extremest rigour, he sentenced, all the secular clergy either to death, or the formal abjuration of their religion and worship. He look'd upon the former as the miserable victims of their own credulity, and of a reigning error, which persuaded them that the renouncing of all pleasure, the perpetual mortification of the body, and a separation from all society, were the only efficacious means of living innocently, as being alone capable of extinguishing the passions; at least after several years indulgence. On the contrary he regarded the bishops, priests, and secular clergy, chiefly as a political combination of men, united for the purpose of making religion subservient to their passions, their concupiscence, avarice, pride, and dominion; and who had the secret of persuading the people, that an implicit obedience to them was inseparable from that which was due to GOD. Moreover he look'd upon them as the real authors of an infinite number of disputes, which then divided the professors of Christianity; as the inventors of the superstitions of those times; in short, as false teachers, who had labour'd to plunge all men into error, according to their several conditions, ranks and degrees of capacity.

Return we now to the travels of Mahomet, which have occasion'd the introduction of so many new sciences into Arabia; particularly those which have refined the sentiments of a hunter, or a caravan-merchant into the notions of an incomparable statesman, and a legislator superior to all that antient Greece could ever boast. As Mahomet advanced in age and strength, his genius plann'd the greatest designs;

signs; and, altho' traffick appear'd to be his principal attention, he never took a journey from whence he did not collect some instruction of a different nature. He travell'd at first to the maritime cities on the Southern coast of Arabia, as Mocha, Adan and Maſchata, where he traded to India. He propos'd to import from thence directly the commodities proper for Syria, and particularly ſilks, for which the luxury of Conſtantinople occaſion'd a great demand; but which going thither by the way of Egypt, had neither the gloſs nor variety of colours, that might be beſtowed upon them if they were firſt carried to Tyre and Sidon. This mercantile ſcheme (which ſhews his capacity for ſtill greater views) occaſion'd his travelling ſeveral times thro' the mountains of Yaman, and conſequently furniſhed him with an exact knowledge of the opinions, cuſtoms and manners of the people of that vaſt country. He traded likewise into the land of Oman, to purchaſe gold-duſt and the pearls that are fiſh'd for on the coaſt of Ormus and at Bahrein. He found but little vent for theſe things at the capital of the Perſian empire, becauſe the nobility there had leſs pride than in the Roman provinces; and moreover they had the ſame merchandizes brought thither, without paſſing thro' the hands of foreigners. This perhaps excited his jealousy of the power of the Perſians, and from hence he concluded it abſolutely neceſſary for the publick advantage to root them out of Arabia.

Furthermore, Perſia was then rent with inteſtine wars, which made it very dangerous for foreigners to reſide there. The cauſe of thoſe troubles, was the

conduct of the princes that succeeded Nouschirvan. A wise and moderate king is seldom resembled by his heirs; especially if the length of his reign has tired the patience of those that aspire to the throne. Upon such occasions, expectation has almost the same effect as hatred; that is, it induces an aversion to the manners and maxims of him who has held the sceptre too long. But the alteration in the civil government, which results from hence, always throws reproach on the successor; tho' he should be guilty of no other crime than contradicting the usual customs and establish'd practice. Thus Hormisdas, who succeeded Nouschirvan, exerting an extreme severity, particularly against the nobles and magistrates, they compared this conduct with the humanity of his father. He appeared a prodigy of cruelty; and this produced several rebellions, and among the rest that of Baharam Tehoubin, who dethron'd him and forc'd his son Coiroes II. to fly for refuge to the Greek emperor Mauricius; who was deposed himself a little while after by Phocas. The Romans laid hold on that favourable opportunity to lead their arms into Persia; where Cosroes, the rightful monarch, had a great party. Mauricius not only afforded him a powerful supply of troops, but he also promised him his Daughter Irene in marriage. This war lasted two years; and was concluded by the death of Baharam. So that when Mahomet went into Persia, their affairs were in such confusion, that he did not like staying there.

In the mean time, fortune, who plays with empires as with men, diverted herself with the destruction of

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Mauricius, by raising up against him an enemy the most unworthy and contemptible that Greece could produce, Phocas, who conquer'd him without a blow, by the meer intrigues of the priests and bishops of the court, who had made themselves masters of his person and family. Mauricius, and his house, died by the hands of the executioner. Irene alone, married in Persia, to a deprived prince, escaped the fate of the family. But tho' she had obtained the rank of one of the mightiest queens upon earth, tho' she had the absolute possession of the heart of her royal consort, who was enchanted with her beauty ; yet in all this there was no happiness to her ; having had the misfortune to fix her affections on another lover, to the rejection of an husband so passionately enamour'd. The moving story of their unhappy loves, under the names of Cosroes and Shirin, is at this day in the hands of the Persians, who esteem it the finest and most delightful lesson that ever was read upon the tragical consequences of that most violent passion. Cosroes, infinitely griev'd at the deplorable catastrophe of the emperor Mauricius, his father-in-law, immediately declared war with Phocas, and carried it on successfully against Heraclius his successor ; from whom he wrested Mesopotamia, and all Syria ; 'till at length the fortune of his arms suddenly changing, the latter not only regained those provinces, but also marched his victorious troops into Persia, with such prodigious success, that he occasioned the deposing of Cosroes, and also his death, after a reign of 38 years.

'Twas in this very reign that Mahomet went into Persia, where, with his marvellous sagacity, he soon discerned that the end of that monarchy drew nigh; since its antient laws were supplanted; and their continual disposition for multiplying new ones to regulate their abuse, did but alter more and more the established constitution. He also perceived in all the subjects a sort of insensibility that averted their thoughts from the publick good, lest it should fill their heads with private schemes, incompatible with the common interest. He found no more, that laudable zeal which once animated equally the whole nation to support and extend its glory. The nobility knew themselves no longer. The grandees forsook their rank to affect that of princes. The princes, by another caprice, would not so much as think of gaining the esteem of their people; but abandon'd themselves to the wild irregularities of a corrupt imagination, delighted only with extravagance. Yet still the treasures of Persia subsisted. They preserved at Madyan, in the subterraneous vaults of an impregnable * castle, more gold than there was in all the world beside; and another outward treasury presented to the sight of the curious, such an immense abundance of pearls, diamonds, pieces of wrought silver, and rich tapestries embroider'd with gold and pearls, that the magnificence of the Romans was as nothing in comparison. But, (as the Alcoran says,) What are treasures without being used; or without the dispensation of the wise; who know the proper season when

* They counted in that castle 40,000 pillars or tables of silver, and 30,000 pieces of embroider'd tapestry.

to open and when to shut them? The mighty monarchs who amassed all these, thought only of supplying their successors with the means of sparing their people: but on the contrary, bad kings hoard up, or squander their treasures, and abate nothing of their rigour towards their poor subjects.

Mahomet also informed himself exactly of the Persian method of making war, and of assembling their armies. He approved not their custom in this last particular, because they never kept up a body of regular forces; but order'd occasionally a greater or lesser number of troops from the several provinces, according to the present necessity; without knowing the condition of those that were obliged to march, or the number of those who remained behind to carry on the daily labours of the country, which sometimes by that means lay uncultivated. On the other hand, he observed their manner of subsisting their armies in the most difficult places, by means of convoys; which never failed them, and which they secured with so much precaution that no enemy could intercept them. He thought them herein worthy to be imitated by every warlike nation, Since 'twas this, that had render'd them so often victorious over the Romans; who, on their part, incapable of sustaining the heat of the sands, or the want of water, perish'd infallibly whenever they march'd far from the rivers. As to the religion of the Persians he condemned it, upon the sole prejudice of the construction of their temples, wherein they preserved the perpetual fires to which they paid divine honours. Nevertheless, he does not seem ever to have examined

thoroughly whether that worship was absolute or relative. But 'tis likely he thought that GOD, who is an invisible Being, could not without absurdity be represented by any corporeal thing. For, in explaining this matter in the Alcoran, he says expressly, that the propensity there is to transfer to the creature the adoration due to GOD alone, testifies the danger of imagining that he can be represented by any thing.

Persia being thus known, Mahomet was led by commerce into Syria. Here he procured linnens and stuffs, of great demand among the Arabians for raiment. In this country his attention was increased to inform himself of the military discipline, political government, and religion of a nation so potent and renowned as the Romans. But he was prodigiously astonish'd to find that this empire, so extoll'd by those who knew nothing of it, except the name, was, as well as the Persian, upon the brink of approaching ruin. That, indeed, it was now only an empty representation, or rather, a meer shadow of what it once had been. Its emperors were no longer ally'd to the throne by blood or by birth. They held it only as the reward of their crimes and tyrannical usurpation; or as the sole gift of fortune. They maintained themselves in that exalted seat, not by the love of the people, not by the esteem of the soldiers, but by means of the same artifices, intrigues, and violences that first procur'd their dignity. And being arrived at the sublimest point of prosperity, they had no other employment than to pillage the people, and heap up money; not to minister to their beneficence, but to pay

pay a militia of Barbarians, who after they had exhausted, then plunder'd at discretion the cities and provinces, already ruined by the avarice of the prince. The governors, the generals, the officers, and the magistrates, were those very Barbarians, who were naturalized Romans by their own authority, when they were grown considerable and wealthy enough to oblige the emperor to grant them what posts they pleas'd to chuse, for themselves or for their creatures.

He learnt, that their armies were no longer compos'd of veteran troops, trained up in the school of Belizarius, and Narfes; that the leaders of the legions and centuries were lost and dispersed, no body could tell how; that the new soldiers had no more valour than experience, being accusom'd to fly when they met the Persians or Arabians; that there were no volunteers among them; none but men snatch'd forcibly from the bosom of their families, to be compell'd to march from one end of the world to the other, without the hope of ever revisiting their friends or their parents; that the best of their troops were only such, as having sometimes succeeded in evading the pillage of the Barbarians, either by defending their cities, or fortifying themselves in woods, had now settled in a military life, which necessity had forc'd them at first to embrace; but that in drawing them out of their different provinces, there was this ill consequence, that they remained expos'd to the practices of those who might be desirous of taking advantage of proper conjunctures. He also learnt, that dissolution of manners, and the iniquity of men was

was arrived at such a pitch, that they no longer retained either virtue or honour. 'Twas a maxim with Phocas, who then reigned, That those idols called virtue and probity were regarded by none but weak and silly people. Others were equally depraved, only having more or less cunning to pursue their interest, which was all that distinguished them.

In consequence of this principle, there was no courtier who did not publicly sell justice under the name of protection : nor no military chief that was not a barbarous savage, incapable of any regard to the publick good, or who was not known to be patronized by some bishop or priest in authority, or some eunuch of the palace. All, uniformly and only attentive to the means of getting money, for no other purpose but to support a luxury so much the more detestable as it was an insult on the publick misery, and an unbridled debauchery defying all law. In the mean time, the people were Christians, who, according to the first idea that Mahomet had entertained of them, ought to be just, disinterested, faithful, compassionate, and mortified. On the contrary, he saw with horror, that Christians, in their own country, were only a people who had sold themselves to work all manner of wickedness, and whose religion was distinguished from Paganism only by the outrageous quarrels and divisions it occasioned. He was a witness of that more than shameful superstition to which they had advanced the worship of the saints, and the reverence of their images ; upon which not only their piety depended, but all sort of trust and alliance for de-

desirable events. If the emperor bestowed any important employment, or office, the government of a province, or the command of an army, he always accompanied it with a present of an image, which was to make a suitable return to the fidelity of him that received it, or grievously to punish him, with some heavy misfortune, if he failed in his duty. They proceeded in the same reasonable manner among their troops. Not only every officer had his particular image, to which he had recourse for obtaining courage in time of need, or rather, such success as might not require any great effort of his virtue ; but also the entire bodies, the legions, and the cohorts, had each their image in a little chappel with two wheels, which marched in the front ; and in encampments was always stationed in the place of least danger. To this image they went to supplicate, first, for the preservation of their life, and to be defended from wounds ; and next, they prayed for the success of the arms of the empire. But as their first vows were offered up to it for a blessing easily and certainly obtained by flight, the sum of these prayers was no more than to grant them a good pair of legs.

We may well conclude that a judgment so just and solid as Mahomet's, could not perceive such abuses, without conjecturing the imminent downfall and dissolution of the state wherein they reigned. We might extend this thought even farther, and suppose that these reflexions led him from that time to project the means of uniting the Arabian nation, and then employing it to the destruction of both those famous empires, in the manner he executed it thirty five or
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forty years after. Again, if we examine the means which might rise in the imagination of Mahomet, for accomplishing this union of minds, with which his work was to begin, we shall conclude, that nothing could have so commanding a sway herein as religion; towards which the Arabians, such as we have above represented them, had a natural propensity; which, prudently managed, might be exalted into enthusiasm. But it will happen unfortunately, that instead of chusing the Christian religion, which by its characters of truth, and the rectitude of its morals, evidently deserved the preference, Mahomet was so violently turned against it, by the abuses in its practice which he himself had seen, that he was rather excited to attack it, than to reform that which every true Christian bore with pain and sorrow. Moreover he thought that the power and religion of the Romans were so strongly united, that they could not be encounter'd separately. I do not pretend to say that he conceived these high designs from the time of his first travels; but I truly represent the disposition and state wherein he found the Romans and Persians; upon which he afterwards formed his plan of a new religion, and made use of that as a method for compassing the utter destruction of both those empires.

It cannot be denied that Mahomet did not understand the principles of Christianity; upon which we shall find he has plentifully reflected for the extent that the revelation of Jesus Christ has given to that of Moses. He certainly had read the Holy Scriptures of both testaments; and he has applied them very happily to matters contained in his Alcoran.

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For although he seems to have altered the passages he quoted in some places, 'tis plain he had no farther meaning in it, than to satisfy the prejudice of his countrymen, and to improve their opinions and traditions upon several articles, in themselves of little importance ; for his chief business was to bring the Arabians into the system of doctrine he had drawn up ; and all the success of his designs depended upon the degree of persuasion, into which he proposed to lead them. We see also, that he has treated prophane history no better ; and when we so loudly exclaim against the ignorance and absurdity of his taking it into his head, for example, to make Alexander the Great a prophet, whom we are positively assur'd had no knowledge of the true God, methinks we might discover in this trace, much more of dexterity than ignorance : since he had a vast interest in persuading his nation that GOD sometimes destined the prophets to make extraordinary conquests, and to subject a great number of different people, in order to propagate the truth by force, when simple persuasion is not sufficient. Furthermore, he has not attacked the Christian religion directly ; it is rather ironically, and seems not applicable, but only to the abuses of it, which all the world acknowledge, and of which he had himself been an eye-witness. For, since he hath not alone established the unity of GOD, as the basis of all truth in religion ; the necessity of loving him, and of obeying his laws, which only consist in making a right use of the reason he had given us ; but also the resurrection, the final judgment, and state of retribution, which are the particular doctrines of Christianity ; in short, since he acknowledges the truth of the mission of Jesus Christ,

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his birth of a virgin, his miracles, and the sanctity of his doctrine, he seems to have adopted and embraced all that is most marvelous in Christianity itself. So that what he retrenched, relates obviously to those abuses alone, which it was impossible he should not condemn.

Thus, not imagining that the justice of GOD could impute to a person, a sin that he never committed, he therefore could not understand that the satisfaction of Jesus Christ was necessary to cleanse mankind from any original stain. Again, considering that the principle of worship, corrupted by images, could be nothing else but an idea of an association of saints with the Deity; (that is, the communication of power to work miracles and prodigies, which he thought reserved to GOD alone, diffused nevertheless among certain dead people, accounted happy before the last judgment) he hath proscribed this opinion and condemned it; not only as a plain contradiction, but as actually injurious to GOD who can have no companion. From hence proceeding to the doctrine of the incarnation of the Word, which makes a GOD of a real man, by the ineffable union of two incompatible natures, such as finite and infinite; he was willing to think, that the expressions of Jesus Christ himself, and of his Apostles, had been here mistaken, by imposing upon them a meaning they could not admit, and which none pretended to fix upon them but the most bigotted people. He was shocked as much with the doctrine which separates the same GOD from his Spirit, by believing them two distinct Persons: and he intended (without reviving Platonism, or the speculations of the philosophers of his school)

to render to GOD his true Glory, and to the people the exercise of the soundest reason; by abolishing all confused, equivocal, and disputable notions, which had, till then, occasion'd such a number of contentions: and by reducing the creed of the faithful to the profession of one only GOD, the infinite Creator of the universe, the just rewarder of good and evil. This principal article he enacted into a law, that condemned associations, together with all those who misconceiving the simplicity of the Divine Being, ascribed to him a son and spirit distinct from himself.

This is the manner in which Mahomet wrought up his scheme, and the system of a religion stript of all controversy, and which proposing no mystery to offer violence to reason, confined the imaginations of men to be satisfied with a plain invariable worship, notwithstanding the fiery passions, and blind zeal that so often transported them beyond themselves. A system, that cannot be attributed to the suggestion of some ignorant monk, or some whimsical impostor, who actually pitched upon a man, full of vices and natural imperfections, that they were afterwards obliged to disguise with all kinds of artifices, in order to make him their Prophet; but which seems to have been the result of long and deep meditation upon the nature of things, upon the state and condition of the nations of the world at that time, and upon the reconciliation of the objects of religion with reason, which must always try the things presented to the understanding. Farther, we may regard this scheme as the most stupendous enterprize, that the force of ambition could ever impose upon a hero of the most

unbounded courage. Having comprehended the possibility of overthrowing two empires, that had been terrible to all mankind for so many ages, he undertook it without hesitation; tho' he knew, from the first moment, that to finish a design so astonishing, would require no less than to change the heart and minds of men, to tear them from themselves, their habits, their prejudices, their principles, in which they had been educated, and which were become inveterate. In a word, having coolly and calmly surveyed all the difficulties of this amazing plan, and having long ponder'd them all, he had the bravery to attempt it, and the glory to accomplish it.

Such was the effect of the travels of Mahomet, and of the various knowledge he acquired by their means. In the mean time, if we may be bold to say it, it is not only to the indignation excited by so many reproachful things in religion, and tyrannical excesses in government, that so grand an enterprize is to be imputed, but also to the compassion he felt for so many wretches subjugated to the wanton will of wicked princes, and their evil ministers. The thought of their misery, compared with the liberty enjoy'd in Arabia, tho' without pride or treasures, so melted the heart of him, whom we to this day upbraid with a barbarous ferocity, that in discoursing of his travels, and relating the sufferings of the people in Syria, he commonly concluded his narration with this expression, "And yet the Greeks are men:" which manifests his humanity, how much he pity'd them, and the desire he had of relieving them.

In short, Mahomet, being arrived at twenty eight years of age, richer far in the gifts of nature, acquired accomplishments, observations and reflexions on all he had seen of the world, than in the possessions of fortune, fixed his affections on a widow of the City of Mecca, who had for some years testified an esteem of his probity, and an inclination for his person. He had, in the course of his travels, performed some business for her; and the account he made up with her was so just, and so disinterested, that she could not but entertain a vast esteem for the principles of a man that seemed to have been subjected to adversity, only to display his probity with the greater lustre. He was then in the flower of his days; and tho' he was of no extraordinary stature, yet his animated features, the fire of his eyes and the modesty of his deportment, made such an impression upon the heart of this lady, that she intimated to him her design to wed him preferably to the richest Arabians, who eagerly solicited to attain that happiness. The name of this widow was Gadija or Cadijah; whose husband Abdumenaf had enriched her, by settling upon her all his fortune, which she thought so to dispose of, in her turn, as to deserve universal applause, by marrying of Mahomet, and transferring all those riches to him, which she might have kept for herself. Abu-Taleb, the uncle, and, formerly, tutor to Mahomet, was very earnest for this marriage, to which his uncles Abu-Jahel and Abbas were not so well inclined, from a secret jealousy they had conceived against their nephew, for the eminent qualities they had discerned in him; and which they thought so great, that nothing

thing but poverty could retain him in that inferior rank wherein he was born ; being the last and youngest of his family. This jealousy increased in proportion to the fame of the pretended prophet, and afterwards gave birth to a number of obstacles to all his enterprizes : so that nothing but the death of the former, and the imprisonment of the latter, could put a stop to the effects of their animosity.

Mahomet, being married, seemed to give himself up totally to the satisfaction of his spouse ; never was husband more tender or more obliging than he shew'd himself to Cadijah ; as on her side, never was a rich lady so submissive to a man, who could boast no wealth when she made him her husband ; being constantly attentive to lull his cares, and sooth him into a sweet forgetfulness of all his former toils, by the pleasure and tranquility of a plentiful house. He thought not, during Cadijah's life, of multiplying his wives, or keeping of concubines, as he might have done by the custom and law of the country : but he only wish'd to give children to her, the pledges of his tenderness and benevolence ; and he had five in the course of seven years ; namely three sons and two daughters. The eldest was called Casem, and was born to him in the 31st year of his age ; and his nativity gave him so much joy, that he took the surname of Abul-Casem, that is the father of Casem, according to a very common custom in Arabia, when they have long desired male issue. Nevertheless this favourite boy, in whose person he hoped to have seen the effect of the promises that had been made to himself in his youth, was snatched away by an unexpected sickness, when
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he was four years old. He lost his other sons apace, and their mother soon after, with a sorrow that all the wealth she left him could not assuage or diminish.

"Tis thus" (say the commentators) "that the election of GOD was pleased to disengage him from all the things of this world; from what he might most reasonably have been fond of among all sublunary things; that so he might learn to love permanently the things that are eternal." But when his prophetic ministry, and his power, began afterwards to blaze forth in Arabia; his enemies, who were very numerous there at first, reproached him with the loss of his wife and children as a sort of mark of the divine rejection; because, according to antient tradition, the prophets had always left a numerous posterity, that were honoured in future generations. They even added derisions to their reproaches, and nicknamed him Abtar, that is tail-less, an opprobrious term, by which they designed to disgrace him.

Mahomet was in truth greatly offended, and to reply to them he produced the CVIIIth chapter of the Alcoran; where GOD declares, "That instead of posterity, he had given the prophet the whole world for his inheritance, and all the people that dwell therein for humble children, obedient to the lessons of his doctrine, that contained nothing but truth." The Arabick term, Cautar, which is here employ'd in this quotation, is one of those emphatical words used in that language, which comprehend all the signification that they desire to give them. Indeed some interpreters explain this word, by those of multitude and plenty; so that it signifies here properly,

ly, the collection and concourse of all sorts of spiritual and temporal blessings; comprehending riches, family, science, beneficence, disciples, principalities, renown, authority, friends, glorious actions, miracles, habitual virtues, and generally all kinds of gifts and endowments, which the grace of GOD had heaped upon the person of Mahomet. Other commentators allege that Cautar is really a river in Paradise, the possession whereof GOD promised to the prophet in exchange for posterity, among which would be found some wicked and finners: "This river is" (say they) "of an immense extent, its banks are of the purest gold; the pebbles it glides over, are diamonds, pearls and rubies; its water is sweeter and whiter far than milk; its foam more sparkling than the stars of heaven; and the man that tastes, but once, of its immortal stream, shall never know any alteration in his blissful life." In short, others put a mystical interpretation upon this fabulous description of a thing no where existing, and discover therein all the properties and wonders of the spiritual and intellectual life: which all Musulmen must make their aim, if they would live up to their vocation. I have exhibited this sample of Arabian eloquence, to manifest not only its character, and the difficulty of imitating it, but also, more properly, what Mahomet's was, who, for the choice of his terms in the Alcoran, and the ample signification of which they are susceptible, besides the elevation, energy and beauty of his diction, has never had its equal in his own country, neither before his time, nor since in the space of eleven hundred and fifty

fifty years that have run out between his nativity, and the time in which we live.

Mahomet, being now 36 years of age, and accustomed to a retreat, wherein he had enjoyed a quiet family, the company of a wife that he loved, and, above all, those deep meditations that engrossed his thoughts, intended to take another wife. And as his riches render'd him a good match, and he had the highest reputation for justice, integrity, bravery and capacity in business, he was qualified to aspire to the best alliances. He cast his eyes upon one of the daughters of Abdallah, surnamed Abu-Beker, the son of Othman, of the family of Teim, descended from Caab, the father of Koraish, his eighth grandfather. This Abu-Beker was one of the principal inhabitants of Mecca; he was also surnamed Al-Seddick, that is, the just, a title conferred on his virtue; which was honoured by all his countrymen. He had, on his part, a great respect for Mahomet; so that full of esteem for each other, they gladly concurred to unite themselves more closely by such an Alliance. The daughter, whose name was Ayesha, was very young when Mahomet married her. She had been bred up by her father's sister, which she was not much the wiser for; her constitution having inclined her to wantonness and intrigues, in which she engaged herself all her life in spite of the reproofs of her husband and her father. Thus she would have greatly interrupted the sweet tranquility that Mahomet desir'd in his family, if he had not for some time kindly imputed her errors to her youth. But at last he was obliged to reprehend them with authority; and this

occasioned several laws in the Alcoran concerning the conduct of wives, and the power of husbands. The youth of this lady adds probability to the opinion of those who assert, that she was a virgin when these nuptials were celebrated. So that the principal surname of her father was drawn from this quality of his daughter. For indeed Abu-Beker signifies only the father of the virgin, and this is an appellation with which Abdallah was honoured, not only while he lived under the empire of Mahomet, his son-in-law, but when he attained to the sovereign power, under the title of Caliph. On the other side, Mahomet, instructed once in his life in that sort of pleasure peculiar to such a marriage, desired to feel it no more; but contented himself with wives that had already had some experience in the conjugal life, whether they were repudiated or widows; and he was not deceived in his hope of meeting among them with more tractable dispositions, more attention to his will, and more conduct, or regard to decency.

Dr. Prideaux, in his life of Mahomet, determines freely that Phatima, the only child of Mahomet that survived him, was the daughter of Cadijah, and the last of his children. M. Harbelot, on the contrary, assures us that she was the first fruit of the marriage of Ayesha, grounded upon the common tradition that says, Mahomet lost his first wife at thirty four years of age, having been married to her seven years and a month; and that Phatima was born to him in his thirty sixth year, since she died before she was twenty seven, exactly six weeks after her father. In the mean time, as it is certain
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that Ayesha openly opposed Ali, Phatima's husband, and wrested the empire out of his hands to bestow it on Moavia, who was neither of the family of the prophet, nor of her own; 'tis not very likely that she would have rejected her own son-in-law, in favour of a stranger. So we may conclude that Dr. Prideaux adhered most to probability, and Harbelot to exact chronology. But wherever the truth rests as to this, Mahomet, little satisfied with the society of an infant, appears then, for the first time, to have multiplied his wives; altho' it is certain that was precisely the time when he was most intent upon moulding into a form the marvellous enterprize he was just ready to give birth to; and which he seems to have fixed to the fortieth year of his age, as the most proper season of life, for maturity of mind and corporal strength.

It was then between the thirty sixth and fortieth year of his age that he espoused Sweda, the daughter of Hareth, surnamed Zama; which one might imagine was his uncle, and second son of his grandfather Abdol-Motallab. This was not the most beloved of all his wives, since she resigned to Ayesha the nights Mahomet was to pass with her in her turn, according to the reciprocal obligation between a husband and a lawful wife. He espoused also Sephiah, who was a Jewess, and of Levitical extraction; which made her say, when the gift of prophecy was manifested in her spouse, "that Aaron was her father, "Moses her uncle, and Mahomet her husband; so "that she was raised above all the women of Arabia, "by reason of her affinity with the highest prophets." 'Tis impossible to mark exactly the times of his other

marriages, which were in great number : as well from his being of a robust and vigorous constitution, as because he was no longer fixed by any particular passion ; and therefore he stood in need of variety for his recreation, or rather for the relief of the labours of his mind. There are some authors that say he had twenty-one wives, five of whom died before him ; six, thro' their own fault, had the misfortune to be repudiated, and ten he left widows at his death. Others reduce the number of his wives to fifteen, which inclines one to think that the former reckon'd some concubine slaves into the number of his legal wives ; of which, nevertheless, he had a very great number ; much beyond what the necessity of order permitted him to grant to his followers : to whom, in recompence, he left the entire disposal of their slaves purchas'd with money ; yet not without their consent to a work, which, intended by nature for a reciprocal pleasure to the two sexes, requires that the stronger should then lay aside his power. The other women that Mahomet espoused towards the middle of his age were Em Selema, Em Haliba, Maimunah, and perhaps Jeweira ; tho' 'tis likely the marriage of this last was some years after the others. For as all his wives had been married before ; they lost, a good while before the prophet's death, the beauty that had engaged him to espouse them. This also obliged him at length to fill up the places of that worn out troop, from whom he had no children, with others that could boast the bloom of youth ; who might at least revive his pleasures, and the hope of posterity. He had also, according to natural right, some concubine slaves ; and
among

among others the beautiful Maria, surnamed the Egyptian, who seems to have been dearest to her master, and most dreaded by his wives, because of that preference he appear'd to give not only to her charms, but also to her good nature and complaisance.

But it will always be very difficult to imagine how 'twas possible, that a man of so serious a character as a prophet, charged with the instruction of the people for the reforming of their doctrine and manners, the instrument and depository of the promises and threatnings of the Almighty, the diligent preacher of eternal truths, revealed to him from time to time, and which must consequently employ his whole attention daily, could be, at the same time, so warm and sensible of pleasures which seem designed for more idle persons; and in which the imagination is not exalted with perceptions incomparably more delicate and animated than those of the body. It is indeed astonishing, that a man who revolved in his mind such vast designs, who had so much need of repose for pondering a project whose means must be infinitely complicated, and their consequences of an extent that the mind could scarce comprehend; that such a man, I say, should voluntarily chuse (in expectation of a delight so unsuitable to his main object) the agitation, the trouble, the inquietude, which must necessarily result from the conversation of such a multitude of women, secluded from, and at the same time so much concerned to know what passed in the world, with relation to their husband; who was exposed to a thousand hazards, the least of which were the shame and infamy which might fall back upon them. To

This must be added, the domestick uneasiness springing from preferences given to some or other of his wives by the husband himself; the effects of their mutual jealousy, to try the love, consideration, and superiority they are possess'd of; things to which they attend mechanically, and in spite of all constraint. In short, 'tis such an indecency in a publick person, mature in years, to expose to observation a weakness which infers so many more, that Mahomet's conduct in this respect appears totally inexcusable. However, the commentators have not neglected to draw up answers to the objections that so naturally rise upon this head.

They say, first, that the great ardor, and extreme force of constitution, with which Mahomet fulfilled the duties of marriage, was a gift of GOD, who was pleas'd to solace him with this sort of joy, for the misfortunes to which he was expos'd, in the cause of his glory. They say, secondly, that GOD was pleas'd, by that example, to convince men of the absurd notion they had entertained of the virtue of a useless chastity, and even prejudicial to society, while at the same time they allow'd themselves an actual incontinence, productive of real disorders; which ravish'd their daughters and wives from their parents and husbands; which peopled families with the children of strangers; and cloak'd the most criminal violences and injuries under the colour of frankness of heart, and freedom of thought; to which all the other passions make pretence for the corrupting of innocence and virtue itself. They say thirdly, that the christian superstitions have depopulated the world
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of part of its inhabitants of both sexes, by burying them in desarts and monastries; disappointing nature of the fruit she might expect from them; it was necessary that a prophet, called to open the eyes of all men, and instruct them in true virtue, should practise himself some excesses of that kind, on purpose to engage them to condemn a fictitious virtue that an odd veneration had bound upon them by custom; and on the contrary to fix their esteem upon solid virtue, which, according to him, is always consistent with the universal good of society; and which is as far removed from the enterprizes suggested by licentiousness, as it is from the meanness of superstition, the mere result of ignorance and timidity. In short, they say that the strength of the soul has such a relation to that of the body, that GOD, in bestowing the former upon the prophet, could not refuse him the qualities which are the necessary effect of the perfection of the corporal organs.

He had, say they, a courage above all fear, with which every man of common steadiness and resolution may sometimes be shaken; a generosity which extended to foreigners as to his own countrymen, because it always considered the general utility, and was not bounded by the narrow limits, wherein common ties, and nearest interest confine it: a fidelity entirely proved; a discretion that render'd him steady to his friends, which never perplex'd them; and which made him love and esteem them as sincerely, as he desired they should love and esteem him: a prudence which saw events at a great distance, and which, to

prevent them, could discover the minds and intentions of men at first sight : in a word, since a distinct enumeration might be tedious, he had a transcendent genius that understood how to estimate the justness and efficacy of his means with an unparallel'd precision. These are the virtues that the Arabians exalt above continence, fastings, penance, and the use of monasteries ; and for whose sake, it seems, GOD sacrificed even the reputation of his prophet, with respect to the exorbitant love of women, with which we reproach him. After these marriages 'tis certain he continued to live, as before, in the familiarity of his friends, in the choice of whom he was extremely nice all his life long. Infomuch that 'tis said he had this advantage, that he never was herein mistaken. A felicity that must be attributed to the excellence of his judgment. But as we shall hereafter speak of the choice he made of the first persons to whom he committed his secret, it will be unnecessary to enlarge here any farther upon this matter.

Nevertheless, this is the time wherein our Christian historians have took a fancy to bestow confidants upon him, which no contemporary has ever mention'd ; and to make them the accomplices of the wicked scheme he projected and afterwards executed. These intimates, Dr. Prideaux supposes to be Sergius the monk, formerly abbot of the monastery of Bosra, under the name of Bahira, and the Jew Abdias Ben Salon, under the name of Abdollah Eben Salem, with whom, they accuse him of concerting and completing the project they inspir'd him with, of overturning

turning all the world by means of an invented religion, compos'd of Judaism, Christianity, and human passions ; of which three all together they made an artificial mixture that has seduced half the globe. But Dr. Prideaux grants at the same time, that the combination of these three impostors was so well managed, that there has never been any proof of it directly or indirectly. He agrees also to one indubitable fact, namely, that Mahomet knew neither letters, nor any thing of what we call science or learning ; and that he himself drew from thence the chief proof of his extraordinary mission. He adds, that the zeal of the Christians, roused by the crusades, and at the same time, destitute of the knowledge of facts, as well as of what doctrines Mahomet oppos'd, could not resist the pleasure of making use of all sorts of arms, good or bad, offensive and defensive, against such an enemy. He says farther, and I can't forbear subscribing to the truth of it, that before the translation of some Arabian writings publish'd by the learned of the last age, such as Golius, Eugenius, Pocock, Gabriel Etonissa, Echellensis and others, we knew so little of Mahomet's history, that we were ignorant of his having had any successors besides the Turks ; so far were we from understanding any thing at all of his life and manners. And so, being made credulous thro' zeal and contradiction, we have yielded an easy assent unto all, that offer'd to come and bear witness against him. But if we may be allow'd a more reasonable way of thinking, I persuade myself, we might affirm, that Mahomet the impostor, never discover'd his secret to any body ; especially as

that would have been a very impertinent indiscretion, since his success generally surpass'd his hopes, and he always was supply'd from his own magazine with that marvelous and inimitable eloquence which made the hearts of men his easy conquest. He was ignorant of common letters: I believe it; but assuredly he could not be ignorant of all the knowledge that an experienc'd traveller, with a great natural genius, must acquire, when he exerted himself to make the best use of it. He was not ignorant in the art of making vice appear truly detestable; and of painting truth in such distinct and lively colours that 'twas impossible to mistake it. In a word, with respect to the essential doctrines of religion, all that he has laid down is true; but he has not laid down all that is true; and that is the whole difference between our religion and his.

After this, 'tis high time I should say something to clear myself from the impression that the Oriental and Arabian style I make use of in this narration, may make upon the reader. I am a Christian as well as he, and as sincere in the profession of it; but I reject two opinions, upon which our controversy with the Musulmen has turned, unto this day. The first is, "That there is not any rational inducement in all that they believe or practise; insomuch that common sense must be discarded, in order to embrace their system." The second is, "That Mahomet was so coarse and barbarous an impostor, that he is not a man, who does not or cannot perceive plainly his cheat and corruption." Against these principles I maintain, First, That setting aside Christianity,

anity, which enlightens us vastly beyond what Mahomet was desirous of conceiving or knowing, there would not have been a more plausible system of doctrine than his, more agreeable to the light of reason, more comfortable to the righteous, or more terrible to wilful and careless sinners; and that in the exercise of the worship he has establish'd, we manifestly discover the cause of that unconquerable affection the Mahometans bear to their religion: an attachment of heart, which our missionaries have greatly experienc'd; who are oblig'd to confess the little progress they make among them. Secondly, I maintain, that Mahomet, the impostor, was neither coarse nor barbarous; that he conducted his enterprize with all the art, all the delicacy, all the resolution, intrepidity, and extensive views, that Alexander or Cæsar had been capable of, in his circumstances. 'Tis true his manners were more simple than theirs; he knew less than those two heroes, of avarice, interest, luxury, and prodigality: in the room of which he employ'd religion as the means of his exploits. He did not more enslave his country; on the contrary, he only desir'd to govern it, in order to make it the mistress of the world, and its various riches; of which, both he, and his first successors made so disinterested a use, that in this respect they must compel the admiration of their greatest enemies. For the rest, as the design of this my labour is only my own amusement, next to which I substitute that of the equitable reader, I think I have no need to justify my style, and the terms I borrow from Arabian authors. A uniform narrative, wherein we can only take a little concern

on the score of instruction, and the knowledge of dogmatical truths, ought, at least, to endeavour to please with a singularity of expression.

We are now arriv'd at that famous year, the forty first of Mahomet's life, that he enter'd into the twentieth of April 611, in which we are going to behold the metamorphosis of a private man into a prophet; illumin'd with revelations so much the more singular, as they scarce ever preceded events, and seem only given to explain the reasons of Providence in their several dispensations; or to demonstrate that its chief design is to lead men to the knowledge of truth, and the practice of good works, that is, those that are relative to justice and the general good of society. The notions we have of prophecy are very different from those of the Arabians. We think, from the instances of the Hebrew prophets, such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, and others, that a Prophet saw into futurity with so much light and clearness, that he knew every thing that must happen, almost as GOD himself knew it. Thus we judge that Isaiah knew the circumstances of the life of the Messias, of his death and passion, and that he has described them with so much evidence to us who read his writings, that he might be accounted a fifth evangelist. We also affirm, that Jeremiah saw all the circumstances of the destruction of Jerusalem, and that he has painted them with colours that must have mov'd the sinners of those days, if they had had any remains of affection for their country. Lastly, we pretend that Daniel declar'd just so, every thing that now relates to the Persian, Greek, and Roman Empires; for we hardly
know

know better what is past, from their history, in some respects, than he seems to have known it, while it was yet to come. But the Arabians do not look upon prophecy as the gift of GOD, altogether so absolutely as we imagine it. They believe it is always characteriz'd by the natural endowments of those that receive it, or according to the application that Providence intends to make of it for instructing those to whom the prophets are to address themselves. Thus, might they say, when GOD was pleased to signify to the Jews the bad administration of their Kings, who earnestly sought the alliance of the Monarchs of Egypt, who moreover suffer'd their people to corrupt their morals, and permitted a spirit of dissolution and levity to seize the capital city, and to poison all their minds to such a degree as to make them hate and despise their religion, and the most important maxims of government; then GOD seems to have raised up several excellent men, whom he endued with a kind of discernment, necessary to affect them with the evil of such an administration, that tended to the destruction of the state. These extraordinary men received also from Providence, vivacity, eloquence, pathetic persuasion, and courage, proper for delivering the truth, and to make it felt in the hearts of all, whom disorder and delusion had not yet render'd obdurate.

So when the captive Jews, carry'd away to Babylon, thought themselves lost, and confounded for ever with the idolatrous nations; GOD raised up Daniel to comfort them with the hope of an approaching revolution, which placing the empire in other hands, should

should employ them also for their resettlement. This is the reason of the representation in Daniel's visions of that grand event that destroy'd soon after the Babylonian monarchy, and translated that dominion to the antient Persians. But as these were vanquish'd in their turn by the Macedonians, who founded another empire in Syria, by which the Jews were grievously distress'd, and the Macedonians themselves were conquer'd by the Romans, who dispers'd the Jewish nation, ruin'd their temple, and absolutely overthrew the worship they perform'd there; it was necessary that these very revelations should represent something of the whole. In the mean time, as it would be absurd to imagine the Prophet knew all this when it was future, with the same clearness that we enjoy after the event, let us content ourselves with saying, that he may have descry'd a very confus'd shadow of it, and which would even have been very useless, without the interpretation of it which he received from an Angel, by the command of GOD. Thus we are brought back to believe with the Arabians, that it is much less of the knowledge of futurity that distinguishes and constitutes a prophet, than the talent of speaking and writing with a force able to reclaim men from their errors, or to awaken them to that attention which they particularly owe to truth and righteousness.

But there is indeed another objection that the Arabians themselves have rais'd against Mahomet, at the time when his call was yet uncertain as to the publick. They demanded of him miracles: as if it had been essentially necessary for a man who had undertaken

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taken to instruct others, to stamp authority upon his discourses rather by prodigies than reasons. They quoted, truly, their paternal traditions concerning the prophets of their own country, and moreover the examples of Moses, Elias, and Elisha, among the Hebrews, and that of Jesus Christ among the Christians. But shall we conclude from these instances, that practical and moral truths have not their demonstrations in themselves? In short, if it was necessary that the Messias should work so many miracles, and raise himself up again from the dead, to prove his divinity; there was no need of a miracle to propagate his morality. All the world has generally applauded it; and it is still admir'd at this day, tho' it is so little practis'd. Thus Mahomet, in preaching morality, had no doubtful or suspected truth besides to press upon his auditors, excepting the doctrine of the resurrection, little credible to carnal men. The unity and supreme power of GOD were not truths of that kind; they were demonstrable by mere human reason. Wherefore the Arabians had no right, and still less had the Christians, to require miracles from a man who constantly declared and protested that he had no other power than to persuade those who would calmly listen unto him, or to conquer those by force of arms who resisted the force of his reasons, with respect to which, he dared to defy men and angels to enter the lists with him.

This being premised, the opinion of the Musulmen concerning the title of prophet which they bestow upon Mahomet does not seem to be so void of all pretences, as 'tis commonly asserted with us. 'Tis

sufficient,

sufficient, that they might justify it by the example of what pass'd among the Jews in the like case, since we adopt their belief in this matter. And therefore it is not necessary that they give us formal predictions of futurity, of facts before they happen, it is enough if they make it appear that Mahomet really possess'd extraordinary talents for reason, eloquence, and composition ; and that he employ'd them in the instruction of mankind, with a courage so prodigious, that they thought GOD was the author of it. For this is what constitutes the character of a prophet, much rather than his predictions of things to come, commonly liable to be unintelligible, or to be so ill interpreted, that no demonstration can be drawn from thence 'till after their accomplishment, which often does not arrive till seven or eight hundred years after the death of the prophet. Such for example are those famous oracles that predict, " That the Holy Virgin should bring forth a Son ;" and that, " the scepter shall not depart from Judah 'till Messias come." Furthermore, the resistance that was long made to the pretended ministry of the prophet furnishes no proof against him that does not equally extend to all that have been call'd to that sacred function ; whose very persecutions have afforded them a title to their vocation, and convicted their enemies of a cruel and obstinate malignity, which is incontestable. So that what may justly be objected against Mahomet, is reduc'd to this, either to deny the doctrines and precepts that he has establish'd, (which would now be very difficult, since it is certain his doctrine has no other fault than its insufficiency when compar'd with the extent

extent of the Christian faith,) or to deny the truth of his mission; of which, verily, there is no other proof than his success, and the beauty of his morality. In a word, what they can pretend for the mission, or vocation of Mahomet, as a prophet, may be seen in the following story, as authors have been pleas'd to relate it.

One night, in the winter of the year 611 of the Christian *Æra*, on the twelfth of January, according to Elmacinus, being in a profound sleep, he was suddenly awaken'd by the appearance of a very strong light, which he felt pierce him, yet without being sensible of any heat. After the first dazzling was over, he open'd his eyes, and beheld an Angel, whose enormous stature terrify'd him, because his head and his feet seem'd to touch heaven and earth. What he perceiv'd in the first moment appear'd to him more white than the purest snow, and of more splendor than the sun's meridian beams; so that unable to sustain the glory, he shut his eyes, reflecting within himself what it might be, and whether he was well assur'd that he did not dream. That moment he felt himself seiz'd by the hair of his head, but without any violence or pain, and found himself rais'd upright upon his feet. With this motion he lift up his eyes, when the Angel appear'd less terrible; but he was struck afresh with dread and terror as soon as he heard the sound of his voice: He fell down prostrate on the ground, with his hands spread over his face, in the posture of adoration. He then heard distinctly these words, "Rise up, in the name of thy Lord and
" mine, who hath created all things, and formed
" man

"man of a little thick blood." He arose, and the Angel presented unto him a paper, saying, "Take, and read, in the name of thy Lord; he hath given the scripture to men, to teach them what they know not: Praise thy Lord, exalt thy Lord for ever." Then Mahomet felt within himself an unknown joy, and such a prodigious dilatation of his heart, that unable to support the excess, he again fell to the earth, deprived of all strength and motion. The Angel repeated to him the first words, "Take and read;" when Mahomet answered, "Lord, I am poor, and ignorant, and know no letters, nor ever learn'd to read." At this confession, full of humility, the Angel reply'd in the magnificent and celebrated words that are become the formulary of the Mahometan faith, "GOD, there is no other GOD but GOD, and Mahomet is his Prophet." This said, the Angel vanished from his sight; and he remained full of ineffable thoughts, mingling terror, hope, and faith. In the mean time, being come to himself, he call'd for the assistance of his women, crying out to them, "Come hither, come hither; wrap me in coverlets, oh wrap me up; for I am ready to die." They found him indeed in a prodigious sweat, and so weak, that they were apprehensive his life was in danger. Thus pass'd the first conversation between the Angel and Mahomet.

But other authors, who think this is not enough, add, that the Angel melted him down, and refined him three times: as well to endue him with the knowledge of the scripture, as to communicate to him courage, patience, and the understanding of hidden

den things, which were necessary for his new function. The words of this first conversation are related in the ninety sixth chapter of the Alcoran. But they are there stript of all these circumstances, which we learn only from those who collected the familiar discourses, and private actions of the prophet. This shews us, that the Alcoran was properly a book whose leaves were never stitch'd together, and whose parts have no connection nor relation to one another. Tho' it is evident, they might have dispos'd them into a natural train, and reasonable order, either by regarding the events that occasion'd them, or the subjects they treated on. But the antiquity of the collection is venerated, it being made by the order of caliph Abu-Beker, soon after the death of Mahomet, at a time when they thought of nothing, but the preserving every part of it, so that none might be lost.

As to the division of the chapters, 'twas many ages after the first collection, and seems to be the work of chance, because their title is never drawn from the matter contained in them, but from some particular word that occurs therein. This too, is an evident proof, that the Musulmen have let this book remain in its native beauty; without ever endeavouring to bestow upon it a finer polish, more eloquence, or better composition; contented with its sublimity in the midst of its tatters. The said ninety sixth chapter, in consequence of the words we have quoted from it, ought to stand the first of all. And 'tis thought also, that the ninety fifth ought to follow that immediately, because 'tis address'd "To the
" timo-

"timorous man, wrapt up in mats and coverlets:" which seems to allude to the preceding story. Yet the ninety fourth chapter, entitled, "Of the divine Decree," explains the ninety sixth in a much clearer manner.

GOD is there represented speaking in this manner, "We commanded the Angel to descend from heaven, in the deep silence of the night that we had chosen, who unty'd thy tongue, and enlighten'd thy understanding. And we will instruct thee in the pre-eminence of that night; preferable to a thousand other nights, to a thousand days, to a thousand years; since it was the hour of the descent of Angels, the ministers of the mind of GOD, who himself convey'd the truth into thy heart, which they deliver'd to thine ear." The meaning of these words is certainly very easy, if we apply them to the event above related. But a celebrated commentator ascribes them to another origin. He says, that the prophet exhorting one day his soldiers to sustain the fatigues of a necessary war, told them of an Israelite who had born arms a thousand months for the service of GOD, and the defence of his religion: but such an instance, far from making the intended impression upon them, excited them to reply to him, that life was too short for them to think of imitating the example of such a virtue. So rather discouraged than animated, every one was for returning to his own home: when lo, this new chapter was communicated to the Prophet, which he immediately dispersed among the people.

But

But at length they made an application of it very distant from the mind and intention of Mahomet; since they have pretended it signifies, that the mere reading of the Alcoran is preferable to a military service of many months, or of many years. 'Tis very plain such a doctrine as this, was diametrically contrary to those efforts of courage and perseverance, that were at first necessary for the establishing of this new religion. And we meet with no such interpretation until those times, when the Musulmen imagined that their piety ought to imitate that of the Christians; who rehearsed every day certain portions of scripture: but they do not pretend to mimic them in the musical tone, and variety of airs they practise in their religious service; looking upon them rather as indecent in prayer, and an obstacle to the meditation we ought to bestow upon the sacred pages. The Mollahs, Imans, and others of the Musulmen clergy, were those who invented the merit of reading the Alcoran; which they erected into a distinct function from praying and preaching, when the Caliphs and Governors had forsook the ecclesiastical ministry, which was formerly the chief source of their authority, and the new ministers of the mosques were become contemptible wretches, destitute of all those qualities that were the foundation of their religion. These ecclesiasticks could not distinguish themselves, nor acquire esteem among the people, any other way, but by introducing new offices of devotion, under the specious pretence of spirituality. Almost the same thing has happened in Christianity, by the establishment of so many religious orders, which contain an
infinite

infinite number of people of both sexes, the greater part of which would be useless to the world in any other profession. And thus we see that the clergy of these two religions, so opposite one to the other, have equally improved the means that have offer'd for separating themselves from the rest of their countrymen, and claiming a distinct preference in the sight of GOD himself. To conclude, this first apparition of the Angel was followed for the space of twenty two years, with a vast number of such revelations, and with the publication of such a multitude of chapters, that a volume was composed of them, called by the Musulmen Coran, or with the participle *Al join'd* to it, *Alcoran*, signifying THE BOOK, by way of excellence, or the book to which no other is comparable: since it contains the pure word of GOD, or the expression of his will, exactly as it was reveal'd by the Angel to the chosen prophet; who was to communicate it to mankind, void of all human mixture, or foreign sentence that might enfeeble its authority.

But the term, "The word of GOD," must not be understood to be a word utter'd by him, or gone out of his mouth, as gross minds might imagine it, ascribing a body, and members to the divinity. The commentators have taken care to admonish the Musulmen in this respect, to prevent their being impress'd with the Christian doctrine of the personality of this word. They maintain that it is a part of that eternal decree, which (the goodness and justice of GOD both concurring) it hath pleased him to reveal unto mankind, by the ministry of Mahomet, to instruct them

them in the most perfect exercise of their reason. Neither will they allow it to be an occasional rule or law, which only then began to be right and true, when it pleased GOD first to declare it. On the contrary, they stile it The righteousness of all ages, and aver that the perfection of the faithful, in whatever time they lived, has always been relative to this supreme justice, which has eternally subsisted in the divine decree. This persuasion does not rest in mere speculation. But as men are naturally prone to encroach upon the simplicity of opinions proposed to them, it has happened, that instead of comprehending in the notion of the word of GOD the respect due to this law in the absolute necessity of its practice, they have run into disputes concerning the dignity of its origin; and have debated whether it was created or increated. And while they have exercised the utmost violences on both sides of the question, according to the credit and authority of those that maintained them, they have totally neglected the conformity of their manners to this rule of life.

The Alcoran, consider'd as a supreme law, in quality of the word of GOD, was appealed to, for deciding the great contest that arose, concerning the successor of the prophet, between Ali, his son-in-law, and caliph Moawiah. But the cunning of the usurper having triumph'd over the candour of the legitimate heir, the dissatisfied people began to murmur and argue upon the guileful arts of evading its obligations which the great and powerful invented. And as the succession of the Alites had always their partizans, so there were doctors, whose imagination was

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so violently heated on this subject, that they maintained the injury done to Ali was no common injustice, committed in contempt of a customary law; but that it was an outrage upon GOD himself, and the verity of his being; since the Alcoran, which determines that children should succeed their parents, is an unalterable law, and as everlasting as GOD himself; whose decree is essential to his being, as it could not exist without his will. Nevertheless, other doctors, no less inclined to the succession of the Alites, but who valued themselves upon their propagating clear and exact notions, immediately found a distinction, in order to gain the protection of the absolute power of the caliphs; who countenanced one or the other side, just as they imagined their opinion agreeable or opposite to their authority, and for this purpose caused some formularies to be drawn up, which they forced him to sign under different penalties, as confiscations, imprisonments, banishments, and even death itself. These doctors agreed that the Alcoran, considered as a part of the divine decree, could not be ranked in the number of created things, because being essential to GOD, it must be co-eternal with him: but then, with respect to men, to whom it was not always known, it must necessarily admit of alteration, as it has render'd some things manifest and obligatory which were not so before; otherwise we must deny the truth and necessity of the mission of the Prophet, by whose ministry this law was revealed.

Nevertheless, as authority very seldom pays any deference to reason, doctor Ahmat Ben Hambal could not escape a correction of fifty lashes that caliph

Aliph Motaſſam order'd to be inflicted on him publicly in the moſque, and alſo a tedious imprifonment, from whence the next ſucceſſor releas'd him; and all this he ſuffer'd, becauſe he could not comply againſt his conſcience, with the will of a prince, who underſtood not the queſtion, or at leaſt was ignorant of the miſchievous conſequences of his own opinion.

When I affirm that this prince did not underſtand the queſtion, I would obſerve that it ſared with him in this caſe, as it commonly does with all princes; who not being divines, and not diſcerning the motives and conſequences of diſputes; ſuffer themſelves to be prepoſſeſs'd by one of the parties, which always takes care to inſpire them with a jealouſy of the other. In fact, zeal for the houſe of Ali, was ſo far from influencing Motaſſam in eſpouſing his opinion, that he was the profeſs'd perſecutor thereof, all his life long, and entail'd this hatred of it upon his ſucceſſor. But, on the other hand, the doctors, vex'd to find that the reward of all their ſtudies and meditations, was only to be the more expoſed to the arbitrary barbarities of their princes, would no longer collude with worldly politicks, nor conſpire with them to propagate the reigning opinions at court, or ſuch as were judg'd neceſſary for augmenting the oppreſſion of the people. This is what hath perpetuated the ſects that ſtill divide the Mahometans to this day, which are now, at length, equally diſregarded both by the civil and military power; becauſe their different opinions in no wiſe affect the preſent government, ſince they no longer concern themſelves with the right of a ſucceſſion, abandon'd, or rather left va-

cant, for so many ages; and above all, since the empire has been translated to foreign nations, as the Turks, the Tartars, the Uzbecks, and Mogols.

This is the general notion conceived by the Mulmen of the Alcoran revealed to Mahomet: to which they add, that the composition of this whole book is so sublime, so elegant, and so persuasive, that there is no attentive reader who does not immediately perceive its excellence and divinity. In short, they forget not to employ the very same argument in behalf of this book, which Mahomet used so successfully; that it is far above the ordinary force of nature, for a man without letters, brought up in ignorance, and destitute of all theological learning (which yet might have been pick'd up by some scholar, even in Arabia, either from the Magians, Jews, or Christians; or from other Asiatick nations, from Indians, Brachmans, Chinese, or Islanders; or from the ancient Paganism of the Greeks or Romans) to project by his own power, a system of doctrine capable of opening the eyes of all the world, and of destroying or dissipating, as with a puff of wind, all that human dexterity, craft, study, interest, licentiousness, or ambition had been able to devise, ever since there were men to beguile the simple, and to engage them in practices agreeable to their several views. "This
" is the cause of all those who have an upright heart;" (says the Alcoran, in the forty seventh chapter) "they
" who are void of a sincere intention, or who are
" not affected with the interest of their own reason,
" or that of universal justice, these have nothing to
" do with our society. Let us persecute them, let us
" en-

“engage them in combat; GOD shall be on our
 “side with the greatest number. Those who refuse
 “to day to be your brethren, shall soon become your
 “slaves. They shall pay you a bitter tribute of their
 “estates, their services, their children, and all that
 “they possess. You shall put them to the edge of
 “the sword; you shall spare only whom you think
 “fit; because they have despised reason and truth,
 “those excellent gifts, of which GOD would have
 “had them participate as well as you.”

In the mean time Mahomet's family was so well govern'd that the important secret of these apparitions was closely kept from the publick; so that for two or three years that this precaution lasted, he still appeared to his fellow citizens the same private person that they had ever known him; living and conversing among them with a plainness, vastly distant from what he was projecting. But within doors he was more serious, more abstracted, and more withdrawn from his wives; he absented himself from them very often for several days and nights together; insomuch that they began to be uneasy at it, especially Ayesha, who was the youngest, fearing some new amour was the real occasion of it. Nevertheless, Mahomet, at that time, thought of nothing else but avoiding all kind of converse. He hid himself in the mountains, in the neighbourhood of the city, to employ his whole attention either upon GOD, or upon the schemes of his ambition, and the proper means to conduct them to that success with which he flatter'd himself. The mountain of Thaur was most frequented by him, because 'twas nearest his habitation; but

he was also farther off sometimes, chiefly at Abukabis, where, according to the tradition, he had the strictest communications with the Angel.

However, as the restless jealousy of his wives seem'd to require of his prudence some particular provision, in order to restore that peace and silence which was necessary for preserving the secret he desired might still be kept, he thought proper to call to him his wife Cadijah, and to entrust her with this important affair. She had been a widow a great while; and tho' she was now depriv'd of her children, yet she form'd no wishes for another husband, from whom she might hope a preference, which flatters so agreeably the most virtuous ladies. She had, moreover, with a great deal of wit, a courage superior to her sex, and a habit of piety worthy of the family from which she was descended. Mahomet took some time to try the solidity of her character; and having judg'd her equal to the great trust he was going to repose in her; she was the first to whom he ventured to declare his prophetick call, with an exact account of all the means he had plan'd for restoring religion, and establishing the publick worship, according to the purity of the notions he had conceived.

Cadijah, replete with elevated sentiments, and a piety transcending the common practice of the tender sex, relished the prophet's propositions, and clearly perceived that the re-establishment of religion would not only contribute to set the nation free from the yoke of foreigners, but also put it in a condition of aspiring to easy conquests, which might exalt the glory and renown of her husband as high as that of the most

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celebrated heroes. And thus persuaded of the excellency of his project, she never ceased urging her spouse to pursue it; and to vanquish his own modesty, as a violent obstacle to the execution of the designs of providence.

The Christian writers, who always delight to cast all the reproach upon Mahomet's imposture that 'tis possible for them to heap on it, compare this seduction of Cadijah to that which the devil atchiev'd in paradise; alledging that as the serpent employ'd a woman to prevail upon the first man to transgress the command of GOD; so 'twas fit that Mahomet, in order to copy his true original, should convey the poison of his wicked doctrine into the world, by the instrumentality of another woman, endued with the arts of address and insinuation. In the mean time, no Mahometan authors have told us that Cadijah ever took any pains to propagate the doctrine of the new prophet. And indeed, 'tis very unlikely that he would have chosen a woman, whose sex obliged her to spend her life in retirement, to make of her the first apostle of his pretended religion. Moreover, all that can be suppos'd is, that Cadijah, being once persuaded, might scatter the first seeds of Mahomet's doctrine into the hearts of those persons who were in her's or the prophet's service.

The second proselyte to the Musulman religion was Zayd, the son of Hareth, cousin-german and brother-in-law to Mahomet; and dignified also with the title of his servant, not only by reason of his intimate attachment to his person, but rather because after the prophet's exaltation to the dominion of Ara-

bia, he discharged the office of his minister ; a function that in those times of simplicity derived no other character upon those that were invested with it, than that of the officer, or the servant : and therefore Elmacinus, in his exact list of the visiers, or ministers of the princes whose history he wrote, distinguishes those of the first caliphs with no other name than servants ; which shews us how far they were removed as yet from the pride of the eastern kings, their predecessors. Again, this Zayd is famous in this history for the injury Mahomet did him in forcing his wife from him, whom he grew enamour'd with ; obliging him to repudiate her, that so he might afterwards espouse her himself. In fine, the third convert was Ali, who was afterwards son-in-law to Mahomet, who loved him as his own son, as well for his surprising bravery (by which he has atchieved exploits equal or superior to the most marvelous things recorded in history, for instances of courage or bodily strength) as for the gentleness of his nature, and his easy yielding to the force of justice and reason, notwithstanding the impetuosity of his constitution. He is said to have been as sincere, and just, as he was valiant. But the simplicity of his manners, and his rigid honesty, render'd him so formidable to bad men, that they industriously practis'd every artifice against him, which he too little suspected or regarded, but which prevailed against him, to the bereaving both him and his posterity of the empire. 'Tis said of him, that he was a Musulman before he was born, and that having restrained his mother from prostrating herself before her particular idol, all the time she was pregnant

nant with him, she was deliver'd of him in the inclosure of the Kaaba, whither she went to perform her devotions. Mahomet himself said, with respect to this singularity, "Ali was born to maintain the truth of GOD, as I was born to declare it." These three are incontestibly acknowledged to be the first Mahometan believers: but the six that follow them, in the same vocation, are not less illustrious.

The first of them was Abdollah, surnamed Abubeker, the father-in-law of the prophet, and at the same time a man of the greatest reputation for justice and probity in all Arabia. Mahomet got the ascendant over him, and inspired him with the enthusiasm which possess'd himself, by laying before his eyes the sad state of the Arabian nation, already enslaved by foreigners; and so little attentive to her own felicity or glory, that she tamely went of her own accord to meet the yoke, one while of the Persians, or another time of the Romans, just as fortune favour'd the one or the other. He shew'd him the unhappy error of having suffer'd the Jews to settle themselves in the bosom of the country; because they were solely intent upon the interest of their nation; he represented that they had forgotten the piety of their fathers, and their covenant with GOD; that if they did not actually plot the seizing on the estates of the Arabians, and possessing themselves of the finest parts of the country, yet they insolently boasted of their relation to Abraham, and refused to acknowledge the Arabians for their brethren, unless to reproach them with their original; and contemptuously treating Hamael their father as a proscribed and disinherited

child. Then the divine fury of enthusiasm seized on the imagination of Mahomet, who began a new discourse, like a man quite transported. He talked in the person of Abraham, addressing himself to GOD, "O LORD, I have placed one of my sons in a barren valley, near to thy sacred house; O LORD, grant protection and immunity to that country; and permit not, that I, or my sons should ever adore idols, or any thing but thee alone." Next he shew'd Abu-Beker that all the misfortunes of the Arabian nation flow'd from no other source than the corruption of GOD's worship: that every private person, every family had their idols according to their own taste and fancy; that this abomination had even invaded the holy place, wherein there stood, to the confusion of Angels, of Abraham, and of Ismael, the infamous idols of Lat and Uzza, to whom were paid those divine honours that are only due to the Deity. This discourse, naturally susceptible of vehemence, and affecting strokes, was push'd as far as Mahomet thought proper for his auditor; for here he stopt short, and with a decent modesty, beautifully regulated, feigned to fear he had said too much, and had suffer'd himself to be hurried too far by his zeal; tho' he could not repent his having thus declared his sentiments to a father-in-law, whose wisdom and affection he was so well acquainted with. But he saw the effect of his eloquence, and had the pleasure to applaud himself upon its success, having observed all the while he spoke, that the tears rush'd down the cheeks of the personage that listened to his oratory.

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Some days after Abu-Beker returned Mahomet's visit, accompany'd with Othman, the son of Affan, (one of the most considerable citizens of Mecca, and who was afterwards the third successor of the prophet) with Abdol-Rahman the son of Auf; with Zobair, the son of Awam, brother-in-law to Mahomet; and with Saad, the son of Abu-Wakas; all persons of importance, and that became still more important after they commenced Musulmen.

Abu-Beker spoke first, and testify'd to his son-in-law, with a humility recorded in the forty sixth chapter of the Alcoran, that he had been so touch'd with the truths which he had revealed to him in their late conversation, that he had resolved to embrace his doctrine; and then addressing himself to GOD, he said, (as it is written in the said chapter) "O Lord, "teach me by thy inspiration. Excite in me that "gratitude which is due to thy bounty. Illuminate "my parents, who have given me life; and enlighten "my children on whom I have also bestow'd it, by "thy will. I resign myself entirely to thee, and I "desire to be a true Musulman." That is, to follow the religion of Ismael, and of Abraham, which being called Islam, communicated the name of Moslam to its followers, from whence is derived that of Musulman. We may easily imagine that this profession was received by Mahomet with applause: and he answer'd in the words that are set down in the same chapter. In which, after he had extoll'd the affection of Abu-Beker for his parents, in consideration of the pains and cares of educating children, and training them up to manhood, he solemnly assured the new

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believer,

believer, that all those who shall believe in GOD and practise righteousness, shall have no fear nor sorrow, but shall receive an ineffable and eternal recompense, in paradise, for all their good works. 'Tis doubtful whether the rest of the chapter is a continuation of the discourse that Mahomet made upon that occasion; because mention is made at the tenth verse of a new conversion of a Jew, which was certainly after this. But on the contrary, 'tis thought he pronounced a part of the twenty first chapter, entitled the Prophets; and which seems indeed a new discourse exceedingly well adapted to affect persons capable of reflection, and better instructed than the vulgar; for whom he seems to have designed the other chapters that only contain descriptions of paradise and hell, exhortations to war, or the promulgation of such laws as he judg'd necessary to be establish'd. Here are some lines of that discourse.

“Citizens of Mecca, the hour is come, when you
 “are to give an account of your reason and your
 “courage. In vain have you received them from an
 “Almighty Master, liberal, and beneficent, in case
 “you use them negligently, or if you never reflect.
 “I admonish you in the name of this Master. I am
 “his ambassador, newly commission'd to tell you,
 “that he will no longer suffer you to abuse his ineffi-
 “mable gifts, by wasting life away unprofitably, and
 “employing them only in unworthy amusements.
 “No more permit delusive pleasures to distract your
 “hearts. Open your minds and receive the truth.
 “But is not this Mahomet, who speaks to you, a
 “meer man, like yourselves? Are ye come to listen
 “to

“ to the chimeras of some dream, some skilful poet’s
 “ song, or to the old fables of antient story; the
 “ trifling entertainments of dotards and children?
 “ Do ye expect miracles or artful feats? Hearken
 “ unto me, O ye men of Arabia: it is GOD that is
 “ going to address himself unto you. It is he that
 “ hath created heaven and earth; and from whom
 “ nothing is hid: he knows the very bottom of your
 “ hearts. * Tell them, O prophet, that to all the
 “ cities that have been overthrown for the hardness of
 “ their hearts, we only spake by men, like unto
 “ others, whom we inspired with the revelation of
 “ our will. Tell them, to ask the families of the
 “ law, and the people of the gospel, and they will
 “ inform them, that my messengers were not angels,
 “ or men who were not sustained by food. They
 “ were not immortal here below; nor could they
 “ prolong their lives beyond the appointed term.
 “ Tell them, we were not the less faithful to execute
 “ all that they declared in our name. We always de-
 “ livered them; or destroy’d the insincere and obdu-
 “ rate. And now we send a word unto thee, which
 “ they cannot refuse to hear. We speak in the lan-
 “ guage of the vulgar, accommodated to the appre-
 “ hensions of the weakest as well as the strongest.
 “ How many wicked cities have we extirpated; and
 “ in their room have raised up other generations?
 “ When these corrupt nations felt our consuming ven-
 “ geance, they fled, with winged haste, from the

* This is a common form of expression in the Alcoran, by which
 the new prophet would have his auditors understand that he did not
 speak of himself, but that the Spirit of GOD transported him.

“ places, which they then believed to be smitten
“ with our wrath. But tell them, the Angels laugh
“ them to scorn. Urge not your flight, ye children
“ of iniquity ; return to your own country, and to
“ your paternal mansions. Doubtless, we shall rea-
“ son with you before you are punish’d. O wretched
“ we ! they will say, we have not been wicked to
“ the degree we are accused of. And they are con-
“ tinually reproaching me with injustice, for punish-
“ ing them till they have been destroy’d and over-
“ thrown like corn beneath the sickle. Say unto
“ them, have we called heaven and earth into being,
“ and all things that are therein, for a detestable
“ sport, without regard to truth or equity ? O Pro-
“ phet, refute this falshood, and compel these vain
“ conceits to vanish away ; pierce them with a thou-
“ sand arrows ; truth shall supply thy quiver, and be
“ the weapons of this warfare, for which we have
“ arm’d and appointed thee. Say, wo unto you,
“ for the unworthy notion ye have entertained of
“ GOD. The heavens and the earth are his own,
“ and there is nothing in all their copious furniture
“ but what invariably obeys him. The sun, and the
“ stars, with all their glory, have never disdained his
“ service : they have not invocated other gods of the
“ earth to raise the dead. Fellow-Citizens, do you
“ not perceive that the very supposition of many
“ gods, all of them equal in power, destroys itself ?
“ But praise be to GOD ; the Lord of Glory ! He is
“ One. And no being can resist his will, or the ex-
“ ercise of his omnipotence. He will call men to
“ an account, and require of them the reason for all
“ those

“ those gods they have invented in defiance of reason,
 “ Behold, this is the warning I give you ; like the
 “ prophets that have been sent before me. There is
 “ no other GOD but GOD ; and ’tis him only that
 “ ye must adore.”

I shall proceed no farther in the translation of so magnificent a piece, for fear the length of it should render it tiresome, notwithstanding the singularity of the thoughts ; that yet only run on common-place topicks, which are treated much after the same manner among us. Mahomet proceeds to recount a short history of several prophets, with some circumstances that we never heard of. He says, for example, that Abraham, being yet a child, was instructed in the truth of GOD by the contemplation of the heavens. That he asked his father the reason of his worshipping idols, and that his father gave him no other, but the imitation of the religion of his ancestors, which they practis’d all the days of their life. That Abraham shewed him the error of it, which only provoked his wrath ; so that the little boy was necessitated to form a design of demolishing those idols, on the first opportunity that his father’s absence should yield him. He adds, that in short, the child broke them all to pieces except the biggest ; and that his father upon his return, being astonished at this havock, demanded of his son the reason of it ; who answered, that forasmuch as they were gods, he might question them, and they might tell him the truth more certainly. Whereupon the father being more enraged, the boy reproached him with serving gods that could neither speak, nor defend themselves. He was condemned,

damned, for this, to be put to death in a burning fiery furnace, from which GOD delivered him, as he afterwards delivered, from the like perils, Lot, Moses, and all the prophets unto Jesus Christ, the Son of Mary, born of a virgin, and conceived by the breath of the Most High, to be a prodigy to all nations.

“For you, Arabians,” (resumes Mahomet, at the ninety second verse of the said XXVth chapter) “you are but one people; I am but one GOD, your only Lord; and you must serve but me alone. The Christians and the Jews have rent their faith into factions; and they shall be called to account for it at the last day. That terrible day! when the wicked shall be restored to being; not to live, as once before, upon this earth, but to become the fuel of hell-fire, in a prison so deeply sunk in the bosom of darkness, that their horrible howlings shall not be heard to the confines of any other world.” This is a taste of Mahomet’s other discourses; in which there is every where the same force, tho’ not the same novelty: since he is apt to say the same things over again, and is liable to those faults of composition, that are common to people who have not sufficiently corrected (by the exercise of eloquence, or by methodical study) those natural talents, which replenish their imaginations with figures, and their mouths with expressions, not equally well-chosen.

The drift of this discourse was to convert the five other auditors that Abu-Beker had brought to the pretended prophet: who, on his part, elevated with the success of having gained some of the most eminent

inhabitants of the chief city in Arabia, assumed more confidence in the vocation he had now openly avow'd, and made no difficulty any longer of speaking in publick. 'Twas to his own house, at first, that the curious resorted to hear him ; afterwards the people gathered together for that purpose, in the publick places of the city, and in the portico of the temple, where the concourse of pilgrims, and other persons professing devotion, was prodigiously great. However, it does not appear that his discourses were as yet attended with any great effect. They heard him with a great deal of pleasure, because he delivered to them several histories that they had never known before, and related them in a very agreeable manner ; but the descriptions he gave of paradise, and of hell, affected but few of his auditors, because the resurrection was a strange doctrine to the Arabians, that they had never heard of ; and which appear'd so incredible when he first propos'd it to them, that the greatest part derided it, or contemn'd it as a childish imagination. Thus in the first beginnings of his ministry he obtained but very few disciples. Nevertheless it was perceived that his opinions continued to spread themselves, and to impress the minds of the people, if not to their total conviction, yet at least, to the creating of scruples in their consciences, and the animating of their courage to the love of liberty, and the hatred of foreigners. Mahomet made great use of the joint consent of both the Jews and Christians to the doctrine of the resurrection ; for he always referr'd the Arabians to their books, in which he supposed the first truths had been faithfully recorded, tho' they
had

had been afterwards corrupted, in several places, out of interest and malice, according to his accusation.

He imputed to the Jews the corruption of the text in their law from a principle of hatred to other nations ; or from that pride and vanity by which they preferred themselves to all the people in the world ; or from avarice, which led them into the practice of a rapacious and insatiable usury, in order to deprive other men of their estates ; far from the exercise of charity and compassion, the most necessary virtues for society ; and which had been so strictly enjoyn'd them by the law. He imputed to the Christians likewise, the corruption of the text of the gospel, from the principle of those unaccountable divisions that reigned among them ; the first effect of which, after their reciprocal persecutions, (which gratify'd their particular passions) was the alteration of a book, that taught only the plainest truths, and, alone inculcating peace and union, condemned equally the animosities and extreme opinions of all parties.

Thus after much preaching, and three years spent therein, Mahomet found he had made but little more progress than the first day he began. He could yet count but thirty nine true disciples, among whom were three women, with one Tela, who pretended to be present at the adventure with the abbot of Bosra above related, and another son of Abucaab, whom Nophail, son of Haeulah, prince of the Korashites, had cast into prison under pretence of his having excited some disturbances in the city. Mahomet had great enemies among the Korashites ; for, besides that
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the people (who parted unwillingly with their old customs) opposed him, fond of preserving their gods, and continuing in the same worship, and their usual method of life, the chiefs of their party, who were desirous of ruling in this sort of republick, had a palpable interest in preventing the schemes of Mahomet; who pretending to reform religion, manifestly meditated a direction and dominion over all their minds, in order to conduct them to his own hidden purposes, which would infallibly wrest the reins of the government out of their hands. Among these chiefs of the city, were reckon'd Abu-Sophian, the son of Haub, head of the family of Ommias; Abu-Taleb, prince of the Hashemites, and Mahomet's uncle; Abu-Laheb and Abu-Jahel, both younger brothers of Abu-Taleb, and consequently uncles of the prophet; and also Omar, the son of Alchattab, a man of the highest reputation with the people; who was prejudiced against novelties, but was judicious, inviolably attach'd to justice, and very attentive to every thing that appear'd to him under the guise of truth. This Omar had some words, one day, with Mahomet, which were of such bad consequence, that the former drew his dagger, and had certainly stabb'd the prophet, if he had not been prevented by Naim the son of Abdollah, who rush'd between them and parted them. The cause of this quarrel was, that Omar's sister, and her only son, had both embraced the religion of the new prophet; and Omar reproached him with their conversion, and resented his seducing them as an affront. In the mean time, this very conversion became the occasion of his own, which fell out in the fol-

following manner. Omar, upon a time, finding his nephew reading in a book, entitled *Thab*, snatch'd it out of his hands, suspecting it was some piece of the impostor's which had disturbed his imagination. But when he had got it, he could not forbear casting his eyes on it, which fell upon these words, "We have not address'd the word unto thee, for the affliction of nature, or to make thee miserable : It is the tidings of mercy, declaring unto men, HIM, who hath created the earth that supports them, and the heavens that shine over their heads." Omar, struck with this lofty sentence, asked who was the author of the book, and found indeed that 'twas one of Mahomet's discourses, which makes at this day the XXth chapter of the *Alcoran*. He read it throughout ; and was as much surpriz'd with the force of reason that he thought he deserv'd in it, as he was smit with its sweetness, and the charms of its expression. However, as he would not determine himself prematurely, he resolv'd to shew it to Walid the son of Mogehirah, a profess'd poet, and who was acknowledged in the city, for a man of the finest taste and skill in matters of eloquence and erudition. 'Tis remark'd in history, that this Walid was a native of the province of Jamamah, where the people use some expressions in a quite different sense from what they bear in polite speech ; this was the reason that at reading only the title, the poet burst out into a most immoderate laughter ; and yet there was nothing in it but the common form that stands at the head of every chapter of the *Alcoran*, viz. "In the name of GOD most merciful and gracious." This indiscretion, caused by some
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ridiculous thought that just then came into the poet's head, vex'd Omar so intolerably, that he would by no means suffer him to read any more of it ; and so the matter dropt there for that time.

But Walid having thought more seriously of it, went himself to Mahomet, and desir'd him to let him see some of his composures. The prophet made no difficulty of obliging him, and recited to him the chapter entitled the Adoration, which is at this day the forty first in the Alcoran. The poet listen'd, and was all attention. He admir'd the lively colours in which Mahomet described the little charity that was commonly to be found among the superstitious, and the associators : " Whose religion (said he) centering in
 " their own persons, only invents intercessors nigh unto
 " GOD, or collateral powers with him, in the false
 " hope of engaging their protection, by easy homages
 " and multiply'd devotions, since their own conscience
 " accuses them of their cruelty and avarice before the
 " GOD of all men ; who is pleas'd to rectify the un-
 " equal distribution of riches, by insisting so strongly,
 " in behalf of the poor, on the practice of the virtues
 " of humanity and liberality." But when he came to the words of the 13th and 14th verses of the same chapter, " This is the disposition of that infinite mind
 " who sees all, and knows the whole compass of
 " things ; of him who has appointed me to admonish
 " the citizens of Mecca. Tell them, O prophet, That
 " shortly nothing more will remain but punishment, and
 " tremendous torments without mercy, like those of
 " Ad and Thamod." At these words despair and horror seized the poet ; his hairs stood erected ; and
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his astonish'd heart supply'd him only with sighs and tears : he fell down at the prophet's feet, who gently rais'd him up, pronouncing unto him, these words full of consolation, which are in another chapter, "GOD requires nothing from men but justice and charity ; that so their neighbour may not be abandon'd : and he only prohibits infamous things, injustice and violence. Those menaces respect the impenitent alone ; and I was only sent to shew the world the way to avoid destruction.

Walid became a Musulman ; and Omar heard the news with great surprize. He was desirous of hearing the motive from his own mouth ; and the account he gave him of it certainly appall'd his courage ; tho' the force of that was soon to become the principal support of the new doctrine. Towards the end of the third year of the call of the prophet, one winter-day, when the people were walking in the sun, in the publick square of the city, Mahomet passing by, perceived Omar and Abu-Laheb, his uncle, walking together apart from the other citizens. He immediately thought that these two men, whom he knew were his enemies, were conferring together about him, and plotting something to his detriment. But far from being provoked at it, he felt his heart struck with compassion at their blindness ; insomuch, that drawing part of his garment over his eyes and face, to conceal his countenance from the spectators, he prayed unto God earnestly, and with the effusion of some tears for the conversion of these two men, or one of them, whom he would please to touch with his grace. He went from thence home, where he arrived

arrived about the hour of prayer, which duty he performed with a very lively recollection of what he had offer'd up before for his enemies: after which he fell asleep upon the cushions or sophas that were in his bed-chamber.

Tho' he only slumber'd, he dreamt that moment he was in a most delicious garden, enriched with all kinds of flowers and fruits, which they told him was paradise. However, he was greatly surprized to see there a sort of bucket, such as draws the water out of a well; and he was thinking to ask, what purpose that utensil could serve in paradise, and whose it was? Whereupon it was answer'd him that it belong'd to his uncle Abu-Laheb, at which he cry'd out, "Ah LORD! what interest can Abu-Laheb have in paradise?" Here he was awaken'd by a noise at his gate, that obliged him to get up. But he was amazed to hear it told him that Omar was come to pay him a visit, attended with Ashiamah, his uncle, Abu-Laheb's son. When Omar entered, he saluted him in these words, taken out of a chapter in the Alcoran, "I have restored him to life who was dead." And Mahomet reply'd in these words, that are in the 34th chapter, entitled Saba, "Behold the sign which GOD gives the man that is converted unto him. If he delights in elevation, he shall find in GOD all sorts of grandeur. He will give unto thee the empire of the earth, if thou remainest faithful to him: but the whole world is a little thing, and thou shalt despise it." These words seemed to pierce the heart of Omar; he pour'd forth a torrent of tears, that interrupted the profession of his faith: during

during which, Ashiamah embraced the knees of the pretended prophet. Then the idea of the dream, and its interpretation presented itself at once to Mahomet's mind, and he cried out to his kinsman, "Lament thy father for ever; alas! he is lost. GOD will not save those whom he does not vouchsafe to illuminate."

Thus was wrought the celebrated conversion of Omar and Ashiamah; the rumour whereof being soon spread thro' the city, struck Abu-Laheb with sorrow and rage, and the Korashites with astonishment and dread. By this augmentation of the number of his disciples, Mahomet found himself at the head of forty two persons, who recognized his vocation and ministry. This was the state of his fortune, to which his assiduity had been able to push it, with the labour of three whole years. Which shows us how many difficulties attend the execution of great enterprizes, however possible and plausible the imagination may at first represent them. But on the other hand, he might applaud himself upon the personal distinction of his disciples: who were not only the most illustrious, but also the most virtuous men in the city; and the most capable of contributing to the success of his design, by their abilities and characters. In the mean time, as the conversion of the multitude was the capital point, he resolved to exert himself to that purpose, by redoubling the frequency of his publick instructions, and refusing private conversations to no body that desired them. 'Twas at this time that he renew'd in his fervent preachings the lively descriptions of hell and of paradise, which he imagined to be well

well adapted for affecting the hearts of the timorous. But he quickly found a much more certain spring of emotion, in his discourses that press'd upon his auditor's compassion and liberality towards the poor: for they equally flatter'd the rich and the indigent; the former with the justness of his sentiments, and the latter were charm'd by their interest. However, he did not think mere words sufficient to carry the conviction of his doctrine as far as he desired. He added thereto the actual practice of an unbounded generosity, as well in himself, as in those of his disciples, whose circumstances would allow them to display that engaging virtue. In short, intending to bind this upon all those that should embrace his religion, he made it an obligatory precept, and enacted that every Musulman should be obliged to distribute to the poor the tenth part of his estate, whatever it consisted in, whether in money, crops, rents, or any other profits.

Nevertheless, 'tis objected to him that he couched this precept in terms a little equivocal, which seem'd to favour the relaxation afterwards introduced, of giving in alms only the tenth of the neat produce of their estates, without touching the capital. But we cannot say that these terms exclude the interpretation of the more rigid, who subject all that they possess to this precept. And even which way soever it is taken, we do not find that Christianity or any other religion ever made so formal a provision, for the comfort of the unhappy, as this of Mahomet: who not contented with a vague and indeterminate charity (which, however, he recommended in general no less than other lawgivers) has prescribed a positive commandment for
distributing.

distributing the tenth of their estates in every year of their life. This then was the time, when the force and vigour of his ideas easily impress'd themselves upon his auditors, and when the struggle in his mind was greatest, with respect to the necessity he was under, either of perishing soon, or reaching quickly the success he had flatter'd himself with: I say, this was the time, wherein he deliver'd his most elaborate composures; either for the historical relations they contained, or for the awakening application he always made of them to the errors and vices of the times, or for the explaining of his theology; which, tho' very simple, yet highly exercised his ingenuity, with respect to the induction of his proofs, and the manner of proposing them; not only as he was unaccustom'd to reason methodically, proceeding by a train of consequences to demonstration; but also because of the extreme ignorance of the people of Arabia in such matters; who, moreover, had a very troublesome delicacy in judging of eloquence, and criticizing the expressions of orators and poets.

But since we have mention'd the theology of this new prophet, 'tis proper to observe farther, that this was the time wherein he must have published the settlement of three capital points, which 'tis of importance to declare in this place.

The first was, to believe the truth, that is, the existence and unity of GOD, exclusive of every other Being that can be imagined to partake or modify his power and will: this he rejected, under the general term of association, as the lowest and most unworthy notion that could be formed of the deity.

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The second was, to believe that GOD, the universal Creator, is intelligent, potent, and just, for rewarding the virtue of the pious, and punishing the iniquity of the wicked: not only in this life, but even after death; since all men shall rise again, and appear before him, to receive the most equitable judgment that he shall then pronounce upon their actions.

The third was, to believe that GOD, commiserating men who perish for want of instruction, which might recover them from vice, and lead them to the knowledge of the truth, hath, in these last times, especially and personally, raised up Mahomet to be his prophet and messenger; from whom they were to learn the means of pleasing him, and of arriving at the recompence of the righteous, and of escaping the punishment of the impenitent. This was the whole of this pretended prophet's theology. And even afterwards, he does not seem to have extended it farther, except in relation to the Angels, and the construction of Heaven, of which he talks very grossly and idly. As to the particular precepts of his morality, both positive and negative, which composed his new law, 'tis very probable that he only resolved upon them one after another, according as occasion offer'd for their establishment.

If the conversion of Omar made a great noise among the people of Mecca, his open and sincere conduct, the frankness with which he gave an account of the motives of his change, to both great and small, and the liberty that he exercised, even to profusion, could not have a less effect towards justifying the new religion. The number of his disciples was so considerably in-

creased, that about the middle of the year 615 of the Christian Æra, which was the fifth of the vocation of Mahomet, they amounted to 114. 'Twas then that Abu-Sophian, Abu-Laheb, and Nophail, prince of the Korashites, more provoked than ever at a progress that made them apprehend the being soon subjected to a man whom they loudly accused of imposture, or the being necessarily involved in the miseries of a civil war, determin'd to convoke a general assembly of the people, in order to take some common resolutions that might be judged most suitable to the danger that threaten'd their country. The Arabian authors that have written the life of Mahomet, talk much of the debates of this assembly, and fail not to ascribe the issue of it, to the particular disposal of the providence of GOD, who renders abortive at his pleasure, all the efforts of human politicks, when they oppose themselves to his righteous schemes. Indeed, tho' Abu-Taleb, the prince of the Hashemites, and uncle of Mahomet, declared there that he would never embrace the doctrine of his nephew, and that he was resolved to persevere in the practices and customs wherein he had constantly lived, and which he had received from a father that all the nation had justly revered to the time of his death; yet he ceased not warmly to defend the interests of Mahomet; maintaining firmly, that he had always behaved himself like a worthy citizen; that they could only reproach him with the particularity of his opinions, of which neither the crime nor merit was as yet clearly known; but that if we might judge of them, by the conduct of those who were said to have embraced them, it would be impossible

to condemn them; since the profelytes were only remarkable for a transcendant increase of all those good qualities and amiable virtues, which had before won them the general esteem of all the world. In short, he insisted upon preserving, with regard to this citizen, the common rules of justice, which allow'd no man to be condemn'd without being heard.

On the other side Abu-Sophian, supported by an unknown old man, whom latter writers imagined to be the devil, disguised under that form, pretended to prove that Mahomet was capitally guilty, in attacking the common religion of the country, in holding particular assemblies, and in endeavouring with all his might to cause an insurrection of the people, by the publick harangues, and seditious libels which he spread among them; and which contained nothing else but menaces proper to diffuse terror, and to disturb the peace of society. These two opinions divided the assembly; till Abu-Laheb, younger brother to Abu-Taleb, despairing to see the most rigorous of them carried, proposed his banishment, as the sole precaution that could be taken for the security and peace of the city, if they failed to punish him with death. The unknown old man maintained on the contrary, that nothing but cutting him off could possibly preserve the tranquillity of Arabia, or defend it from civil wars, which were inevitable, in case he enjoy'd the liberty of pouring out the poisonous streams of his pernicious doctrine in any other places. However, the great weight and authority of Abu-Taleb carried it in the assembly, agreeable to what he proposed at the opening of the debate. Nothing else

was resolved there, excepting that a deputation should be sent to Mahomet, to examine him concerning some facts; and another to the Jews at Chaibar, to enquire of them what use they made of certain points of doctrine that Mahomet pretended to establish by the authority of their law.

But now, Abu-Taleb, struck with the peril of his nephew in this accident, thought it became him to admonish him privately; and as his age, and his former quality of guardian to his youth, gave him a rightful authority over him, he sent to seek him. Mahomet being come before his uncle, defends his doctrine, and engages to prove, that 'twas more reasonable to obey GOD than men; especially in regard to a revelation, which compell'd him with irresistible force, both to act and to speak. He compared it to the evidence of a truth proposed to the understanding, which it is not in the power of a man to disbelieve against the dictate of his own conscience. Upon this Abu-Taleb tried to intimidate him, by threatening to abandon him to the will of his enemies; telling him it was likewise more reasonable to comply with the common opinions, than stubbornly to maintain disorderly fancies: and that he did not seem satisfied with his own inflexibility to the kind remonstrances of his friends, but was desirous of the destruction of his countrymen, by infatuating them with the same odd humour. Then Mahomet, with a strain of generosity, on which the historians have bestowed the highest encomiums, replied to his uncle, that he would rather chuse to suffer death, than engage himself to him in a rash promise, for the performance

formance whereof he was not to be depended on, as he could not offend against GOD, who had chosen him to the ministry that he was to accomplish.

This interview degenerating into contention, Mahomet withdrew; but Abu-Taleb presently called him back, and assured him, that in spite of the efforts of his enemies, he would always defend him from their persecutions and violences. This concluding scene of the conversation was not passed over without tears, that reciprocally testified the tender friendship subsisting between the uncle and the nephew. In the mean time, Abu-Laheb forgot nothing that might contribute to divest his eldest brother of that natural affection which he bore to Mahomet; he attacked him another way, that shews us what a monstrous corruption of manners had then debauched the Arabians, and that it was not without reason that the prophet so often repeated in the Alcoran the story of Lot, and of the five criminal cities that perished by fire from Heaven. There was at Mecca a young boy named Amarat, the son of Valid, who was accounted the finest and most accomplish'd youth in Arabia. Abu-Laheb made an offer of him to his brother, as a reward for the sacrifice he should make him of the person of Mahomet. But Abu-Taleb was inaccessible to so unworthy a temptation; and he was only the more persuaded of the unjust hatred and passion of his brother.

Return we now to the deputation of the people of Mecca to the pretended prophet, and the remonstrances that were made to him in their name, concerning the disturbances he was accused of exciting in the city, among his countrymen and brethren. They up-

braided him also with teaching a new worship, contrary to the immemorial customs of the Arabians, who had always joined with their adoration of GOD the worshipping of Heaven, and all the stars that beautify'd it, as also of images. They said, that they preserved these idols in the publick temples and in private houses, because they never doubted, but that part of the virtue and power of the stars resided in them, either as a grace conferred with design, to favour human weakness; or as the result of the science of those who made them, or consecrated them in the mysterious moments proper to multiply and retain their influence; (which is almost the notion of Talismans at this day.) They added farther, that the doctrine of the resurrection, which he presumed to establish, was not only unheard of, but absolutely incredible; contrary to the experience of all ages, the reviving of the dead having never yet been seen thro' the whole extent of former time. That the opinion of future general judgment, for all the actions of every man, was more fitted to intimidate than guide them; the common good, and the respect due to the publick, being motives sufficient to dispose citizens to fulfil their duties, without the aid of fables, and inventions drawn from among foreign nations, overwhelm'd with superstitions. In short, they told him, that the liberalities of him and his disciples did indeed vindicate his intentions, with those that were naturally inclined to judge favourably of outward actions; but that even these were also very much suspected by others; who regarded them as a sort of corruption, practis'd on the undistinguishing vulgar, in order to catch the suffrages of the people. That therefore
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the fittest conduct of a wise man (as he had shewed himself till then) was to give the least possible occasion of scandal to his fellow citizens, or of accusation to his enemies; especially as he did not undertake to perform miracles in publick, like the prophets of former ages; who refused not, to the different nations, to whom they were sent, that sort of demonstration of the truths they declared unto them: so that if he pretended to teach the same doctrine, he ought to employ the same proofs; otherwise he would incur the general detestation, and perhaps, still more unfortunately, the consequences of a capital accusation before his own fellow citizens.

It appears from these remonstrances, as also from the following replies, that the difficulty raised by the Arabians, never respected the impossibility of a general judgment, with regard to the equity, knowledge, or power of him that was to judge mankind; but, having no notion of the immateriality of the soul, or its essential distinction from the body, they thought this judgment could not take place without the restitution of bodies, with the powers and consciousness of the whole person; so that the very same men, who, on one hand, were supposed to exist no more, in as much as they were dead, and even turned to dust, some for a longer, some a shorter space of time; were, on the other hand, supposed to be restored to their own existence, to give an account of the good or evil they had done in this life; which appeared to them equally incredible and impossible. We see in the seventeenth Chapter of the Alcoran, entitled The Journey, that the miracles they demanded, as the

ground of their receiving the new doctrine, were, either the sudden gushing forth of some fountain in the neighbouring mountains of Mecca; or that some delightful garden might rise before their sight, deliciously laid out in the desert; or that a piece of the crystal vault of Heaven might fall down; for they imagined it to be solid, having no better notions of the construction of the universe, than they had of their own nature. They also demanded the apparition of an Angel, or some invisible being; or that the sublime book which Mahomet boasted to have received from the hands of Gabriel, might be brought to them themselves, that so they might be certain of such a revelation.

The replies of the pretended prophet to these demands are repeated in divers chapters of the Alcoran. But there are none which seem so precise, and of so much weight as what we find in the sixth chapter, and the hundred and fifth and following verses. "They have sworn (says he) by the most sacred oath, that if thou wouldst perform one of these miracles before their face, then they will believe the book that was sent unto thee. Thus shalt thou answer them: Undoubtedly miracles are in the power of GOD. He is the Almighty controller of nature, tho' the infidels do not comprehend it. Say unto them, He that causes the corn to grow upon the earth by watering it with the fruitful drops of Heaven; he, who nourishes man with bread, converting it to the increase of the flesh and bones; has not he power to plant a garden in the desert; or to call forth the rushing torrent from the bosom of the sun-burnt moun-

“ mountains? Yes, surely, he is omnipotent; for he
 “ overturns the reason of infidels, and smites their
 “ eyes with blindness, that they may persevere in the
 “ error they have chosen; error, which they have
 “ preferred to truth. Tell them, O! prophet, that
 “ tho’ they should see the Angels descend from
 “ Heaven; tho’ the dead should rise and speak unto
 “ them; and they should even behold all nature laid
 “ open before their eyes; yet they would never be-
 “ lieve, without the Grace of God. O people! ye
 “ have seen enough to convince ye: we only employ
 “ prodigies for the terror and destruction of unbe-
 “ lievers. Do not blindly chuse your ruin, like the
 “ associators. Glory be to GOD! Am not I a man,
 “ like other mortals? Has he ever entrusted me with
 “ the power of working miracles? I was only sent
 “ to invite you to chuse the good that is offered you,
 “ and to fear the miseries that shall overtake the wick-
 “ ed. I speak unto you nothing but what is com-
 “ manded me; what I am obliged to proclaim aloud,
 “ to those that will incline their ear, and likewise to
 “ those that will refuse to hearken.”

This reply, which plainly shows that Mahomet dis-
 claimed the power of miracles, and that he under-
 took to prove his doctrine by dint of reason alone,
 having nothing to contend against but the errors of
 custom and opinion; this reply, I say, the deputies
 carried back to their principals; who perceived
 clearly, that so much resolution on the side of the
 pretended prophet, and so little truth on their’s to op-
 pose him, prognosticated that the city, and perhaps
 all Arabia, would soon be induced to favour him.

And therefore returning to the execution of the result of the late general assembly, they resolved to send deputies to consult the Jews, in order to be informed, from the ancient writings in their custody, whether the prophets of their nation had taught the unity of GOD in such a manner, as positively to forbid the adoring or invoking of any other object of worship: they were also to inform themselves of their doctrine and opinion concerning the resurrection of the dead: In short, they were to ask them what was the characteristick of their prophets, and whether they were not obliged to prove their mission by miracles. This consultation, which was to have been held with the Jews of Chaibar, was referred to those of Medina, whom they thought more learned, and more capable of solving these difficulties justly and truly. The deputies of Mecca were Al-Nadar, son of Al-Hareth, and Al-Abas, son of Abumaashi; skilful men, able, and fit to bring back the compleatest informations upon those important matters.

The Jews, or synagogue, of Medina, answered to the first question, That their law pronounced there was only one GOD, to whom all glory, honour, and power belong'd; that it forbid them to adore other gods, because those the nations had forged themselves were Demons, or other creatures incapable of procuring them any good. To the second article they replied, That the doctrine of the resurrection, and that of the final judgment of all the actions of men, were not indeed in the text of their law; but nevertheless they received them as truths, because they were traditions of their fathers, which contained

nothing but what was conformable to the justice, wisdom, and power of GOD. Finally, upon the particular question of the deputies, touching the peculiar mark or sign of the prophets, they answered, That of all those who had arisen among them, there were but five who possessed the power of miracles; that possibly the others might have it, but they did not exert it; that they contented themselves with declaring to men the truths which had been forgotten, thro' length of time, neglect, or distraction; that none of these prophets had produced any alteration, either in the written law, or the revealed doctrine; that, on the contrary, they had constantly required obedience thereto, with the strictest care, and threatening transgressors with the wrath of GOD; that this was the touch-stone, and certain note that distinguished the true prophets, from the ministers of false divinities; who were sometimes sent with delusive signs, and seeming miracles, to disturb and obstruct the faithful in their adherence to the truth.

These answers, so perfectly agreeable to the ancient testimonies of revealed truth, were attended with particular advice and directions from the synagogue of Medina to the people of Mecca, how to sound the depth of Mahomet's knowledge, and to try the truth of the revelations he made such frequent pretences to. This account is preserved by Abmed, the son of Abdal Ali, who inserted it in his apology for the Mahometan religion, as quoted by Maracci in his Prodrômus. The way they advised in order to prove him, was by proposing to him publicly three questions, to which he was to engage to reply pre-

sently. The first related to the truth of the history of the Young Witnesses. This the apologist explains of the history of the Seven Sleepers, which was as hidden and as unknown before the revelation thereof to the prophet, as it is now admirable, in the narrative he gave of it, in one of his publick orations, consequent to that interrogatory.

But for the clearer understanding of this matter, the reader should be informed, that the Christians of the east had, as 'tis said, a confused tradition of certain brethren, natives of the city of Smyrna, who having made publick profession of christianity before a magistrate, and being thereupon sent home, they retired into a remote cave, out of fear of the torments that were daily inflicted upon those who persevered in their adherence to the gospel; in which cave a miraculous sleep fell upon them, out of which they did not awake till a long time after the persecutions had ceased: so that when they returned into their native city, they not only found a different people, but another language, different coin, and so great an alteration in every thing, that they concluded themselves to be in some other world. Now, in this story, the following particulars were unknown, 1. Whether in truth, there was any foundation for it at all. 2. The number of the sleepers. 3. The time they slept. 4. The name of the cave, and the country where this happened. Mahomet, as we shall see presently, replied affirmatively and boldly to all these heads, upon which no body could contradict him: And it cannot be denied that this piece of downright impudence derogated from the esteem that was due to his other
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great qualities. But he must be a prophet, or reputed as such, at any rate; therefore he could by no means stop short in such a publick transaction as this.

The second question turned upon the history of the Travelling Victor, to whose yoke both the east and west equally submitted. The commentator again applies this to Alexander the great, the conqueror of Persia and India; but who, however, never extended his empire into the west. But doubtless his reason was only because Mahomet seems to have made the same application, tho' under a different name, calling him the Man with two Horns, probably in consequence of the images of this prince being commonly dressed with the horns of a ram, after his affecting to be stiled the son of Jupiter Ammon; which was not till after his conquest of Egypt, and visiting the temple of Ammon, whose priest, the interpreter of the oracle, recognized him for the son of that God, who was there adored. Others give different reasons for this appellation, which is common over all the east, for distinguishing Alexander the conqueror of Asia. There is also another opinion, which supposes another conqueror of the same countries, more antient than Alexander, and who may well be the celebrated Sesostris king of Egypt. But as what Mahomet says in this matter, agrees no better to one than the other, because the things he relates are incredible and monstrous, this supposition is of no service at all to clear up any difficulty. But however that may be, we are certain nothing can be more absurd than Mahomet's reply with respect to either of these heroes. For without speaking one word of what all the world knew

knew of their great actions, he tells them, that Alexander, whom he calls Dulearnaim, being come to the extremes of the west, discover'd that the sun sunk down there in a lake of mire; and that in the east, he found him rise upon people who had no shade to defend them from his heat; and who were likewise exposed to the ravages and incursions of two other nations called Jujug and Magug, who marched between two exceeding lofty mountains to come to the north, in order to afflict their miserable neighbours. That the man with two horns, moved with compassion at their sufferings, built between those mountains a wall of iron, a thousand cubits high, and by that means closed up their passage, which shall never be opened till the end of the world, when that wall will, all of a sudden, tumble into dust.

Finally, the third question was upon the origin of the immaterial mind, and the means by which it animates the body, makes known its existence, and is capable of communicating its thoughts and reason to others by the organs of speech. And we see, by this question, what Mahomet could clear up by the meer force of his own judgment, and render intelligible to others by that power of oratory which he so eminently possessed. We see, I say, that how much soever of boldness, and even temerity, he employed to supply the defect of his knowledge in the other questions, he has exemplified altogether as great a degree of discretion with regard to this, having drawn the reply he made to it from no other source than his own good sense, and the reasonings of his own mind, as will presently appear.

These

These were the several answers of the synagogue of Medina to the deputies of Mecca, and the counsels they added thereto, in order to testify their desire of contributing to the manifestation of the truth, with respect to the unexpected appearance of a new prophet. But now the Collections of the Mahometan Traditions, by Bockari and Moslem, relate this fact somewhat differently, chiefly in relation to the questions that the Jews advised them to propose to the pretended prophet; nevertheless, as the replies that are preserved in the Alcoran, have an evident connection with this account of Ahmed, I have, without any difficulty, chosen to follow it.

In the mean time, the enemies of Mahomet, more provoked than surprized at the success of this deputation, with respect to the principal replies, hoped at least, that they should be able to ensnare him with the three questions that the craft of the subtle doctors of Medina had so oddly devised. One evening, in the seventh month, they propounded them to him in a very solemn manner, upon condition that Mahomet should answer them publickly, before noon-tide the next day. That morning the people gathered together in great numbers to the porticos of the holy house, and heard the discourse, which is now the eighteenth chapter of the Alcoran, whose title is *Of the Cavern*. This oration, that one would imagine, from the ill solutions of the two first questions, was composed precipitately, is not destitute, however, of the usual grace and vehemence of his other sermons. He began with thanksgivings to the Eternal Being, in that having resolved to employ him in his service,

and to vouchsafe to men a new revelation thro' his ministry, he had laid no other charge upon him than to declare such things, as were so conformable to reason, that his greatest enemies had not been able to refuse him a testimony of approbation. He then encouraged himself to resist manfully all the assaults of contradiction: And passing to an invective against the Jews and Christians, he arraigned them of a profound ignorance, which veiled the true interpretation of their sacred oracles from their blinded understandings; and of a criminal jealousy, that had induced them even to corrupt them. He touched a little upon the offence of their opinion, who hold a generation in the divinity, and ascribe a son to the Creator of all things. Next he proceeded to the first question: He declared it respected some young men in former times, who having bore witness publickly to the truth, afterwards withdrew into a spacious cavern called Abraham, in which they fell asleep, by the will of GOD, till the times of persecution were over: that their sleep was like that of people in a trance, for their eyes were open: He added, that their dog lay at the mouth of the cave, and seemed ready to defend it against every body that should attempt to enter, tho' he was really all the while asleep, as well as his masters; who were seven in number, and the dog made the eighth living creature that inhabited such a marvellous time in this cave: And he concluded this story with assuring them, that their sleep lasted three hundred and nine years; which the commentators explain of lunar years. His whole narrative is embellished with proper figures, to intimate to his auditors,

tors, that this historical truth, which was altogether unknown among men, had been revealed in all its parts to him, for their conviction.

After this, he began upon the history of the creation of man, who, he said, was formed of a little dust, and is propagated on the earth by a seed, which, thro' the will of GOD, springs up into a perfect sex, according to its kind. He did not distinguish the soul from the material part of his frame; if it be not supposed, in GOD's endowing him with life, and investing him with all his animal and reasonable powers. Then he launched forth upon the unutterable magnificence of that liberality which the goodness of GOD has exemplified towards mankind, in conferring upon them this globe, with all its accommodations, riches, and embellishments, to be their habitation and inheritance, from one generation to another. And yet, said he, for all this, all nations have gone astray, and mistaken the essential attributes of the Deity: some having given him companions, and others sons and daughters; as if his power was not infinite, or his eternal existence stood in need of being perpetuated by generation. This discourse was elevated by parables and allegories, that exquisitely painted the restless inconstancy so natural to men, which still disposes them to abandon truth, and hunt after fictions, that the wildness of imagination creates o the damage of reason.

“Propose to them,” (says he at the forty sixth verse)
 “the example of their own life. It resembles the
 “gentle showers of Heaven, that softly falling on
 “the tender blades that cloath the ground, render it
 “green

"green and delightful to the eye for a little space;
 "for when the harvest is past, nothing remains but
 "chaff, which the rustling gales sweep away, as tho'
 "it had never existed. Tell them riches and children
 "are the verdure of the world, they constitute the
 "decorations of life; but good works are the harvest:
 "They shall secure unto you the everlasting reward
 "that is decreed for those who love the truth; and
 "they shall preserve you beyond this life, by the joy-
 "ful hope that shall fill your souls in that day, when
 "we shall cause the unstable mountains to leap into
 "the sea. In that day when the levelled earth shall
 "afford you no shelter from our indignation: But ye
 "shall stand divested of all things, stript, and naked, as
 "at the hour of your nativity, and shall have no pro-
 "tectors, but your own virtuous actions." He adds,
 "at the fifty fifth verse, "We so paint you the truth,
 "as it may either astonish or attract you: but men love
 "disputations; they delight to be lulled and flatter'd;
 "and they arm themselves against the impressions of
 "fear. O! that ye might always recognize the truth,
 "and with tenderness of heart receive its awakening
 "touches! Will ye say that it was never preached to
 "ye? Or that we hinder'd ye, when ye were desirous
 "of embracing it? Say rather, that ye have rejected
 "the offers of mercy; and that ye wait with a stupe-
 "dous tranquillity, for the horrible destruction threat-
 "ened to the impenitent." Tell them farther, "that
 "we sent unto men our servants the prophets, to win
 "them by mildness and pleasing hopes; menaces be-
 "long to the obstinate alone; to the disputants, who
 "labour to confound all truth with their empty subtil-
 "ties; "and to those profane, who mock at our fo-
 "lema

“lemn admonitions. And, indeed, is it possible for
 “impiety to swell to a more enormous height than
 “their’s who having clearly understood the truths of
 “GOD, which have been fairly proposed to them,
 “resist, them with an unconquerable animosity, and
 “treat them with scoffs, derision, and raillery? Ven-
 “geance shall overtake them, &c.”

He afterwards resumed his allegorical method, and
 recited a suppositious journey of Moses with an un-
 known prophet, who quite tired out the patience of
 the former, by his actions that all seemed to be con-
 tradictory to reason; but in the end, he justify’d him-
 self, by declaring the secret grounds and motives
 of his conduct. Next he entered upon the history of
 Alexander, in the manner above mentioned, and con-
 cluded this long discourse in these words, at the hun-
 dred and tenth verse. Lastly, tell them, O! pro-
 phet, “that thou art but a man like them; and that
 “thou dost only communicate to them the things that
 “are revealed unto thee: Namely, that GOD is
 “One; that he never had any partners in the domi-
 “nion or creation of the universe; and will have
 “none in the worship and adoration of his creatures.”

Thus Mahomet extricated himself, partly by an
 assurance not to be disconcerted, and partly by his
 good sense, from the dangerous toils spread by the
 Jews, in conjunction with his declared enemies, to en-
 trap his prudence. They consider’d him only as
 practising an impostor, easy to be detected by some
 unexpected interrogatories, which should force him
 either to confess his ignorance, or the defect of his
 revelation. But it had a quite contrary effect, since
 they

they occasioned these orations, which at once augmented the reputation and success of the new prophet; greatly increasing the number of his disciples, and bringing over to him still more, even in the city of Medina, both among the Jews as well as the Arabians, who heard of these famous questions and his replies.

But whatever esteem the Musulmen maintain, even to this day, for the chapter that contains them, and whatever reputation they procured to their author, we may truly aver, that this is the weakest part of all the Alcoran; and that nothing but the profound ignorance of the Arabians can excuse that odd veneration they have conceived for such frivolous tales as the history of the Seven Sleepers, and of the wall built by Alexander for shutting up the chimerical people of Jujug and Magug. But in return, it must be acknowledged that he treats the question of the origin of the soul not only finely and delicately, but philosophically, according to the notions of those times, that distinguished not the powers of the mind from those of the body.

In this very year, the six hundred and fifteenth of the christian *Æra*, and the fifth of the vocation of the pretended prophet, another adventure beset him, worthy to be recorded in all its circumstances. Cosroes, king of Persia, whom we have already mentioned, prosecuting his revenge for the death of his father-in-law, Mauritius, against Heraclius the emperor, who succeeded Phocas, conquered all Syria from the Romans, and made himself master of Antioch, the capital of the east: Turning from thence, he

he fell upon the city of Jerusalem, which he overthrew, and profaned all the churches, at the instigation of the Jews of Tiberius and Rama. He also carried away the tree or body of the cross, which had been so long revered there, and was discovered by the cares of the empress Helena, in the reign of Constantine her son. This news spread even into Arabia, to the sorrow, confusion, and detriment of the Christians and convents there, who were hereupon grievously insulted by the Jews in different parts of the country. Mahomet himself was moved with it; and thought (perhaps with too much precipitation) that possibly he might bring over this victorious prince to the belief of the truths he preached: which would derive all the glory he could wish upon his new religion, and, probably, cause it to triumph over all the east. He resolved then, to try fortune upon this head, and to make use of the pretence of congratulating the Persian monarch upon his new victories, in order to insinuate into his mind, that the proper means of perpetuating his conquests, were to merit the protection of Heaven, by settling the pure worship of the Supreme Being, divested of all those superstitions that disgrace religion in all the oriental nations. He seems at this time to have abandoned his original scheme of employing his own country in the destruction of those two empires; and to have imagined that the Romans were now on the point of being ruined by the Persians; by which means the power of the latter would become so much superior to all the other potentates of the east, that his first design of subjecting them was

no longer practicable, but in the way of religion, which captivates the victors as well as the vanquish'd.

To accomplish this, he wrote a letter to Cosroes, thinking it would reach him at Jerusalem, or at least in Syria, while he was reaping the fruits of his conquests; but the bearer thereof learnt that that prince was already returned to Madayen, the capital of his empire, to share the joys of triumph with the beautiful Shirin, his beloved queen, on whose account he entered into this war, as we have before recited. It is to be remarked, that Mahomet intended to commit this letter, and this negotiation to the capacity of Omar, the son of Alchattah, imagining that his loftiness and inflexible courage would more impress the conqueror; but he excused himself, because he conceived but slender hopes of success; and advised him rather to send it by Saad, the son of Abuacas, who was the very man by whom it afterwards pleased God to compass the total ruin of that ancient and illustrious empire.

However, the letter was deliver'd to Cosroes, at a time when intoxicated with prosperity, he was scarcely in a condition to reflect on the instability of human grandeur. He despised the Arabian that brought it, and him that had written it, and fiercely demanded who this Mahomet was, that had dared to write a letter to him? And being told that he was the son of a man for whom Nouschirvan, his grandfather, had testified a great esteem, in the progress he took into Arabia; he cast his eye over it, in a very scornful and superficial manner, and then tore it, without making any other reply. The prophet was at once instructed
and

and touched with this contempt: but he satisfied himself with saying to his friends, "Our proposal to the monarch of Persia has not succeeded: he has rejected a mighty favour. Praise be to GOD! who will never abandon the truth; and shall rend his empire, in like manner as he has torn my letter." Nevertheless the rumour of this miscarriage was industriously propagated in the city of Mecca. His enemies exaggerated the consequences, as if the Persian Prince was obliged to invade Arabia immediately; and as if they saw already the scouts of his army wasting the country all around them. Wherefore, Mahomet thinking it became him upon this occasion to give the publick some instruction, capable of appeasing these tumults and alarms, by revealing the hidden things of futurity, he pronounced to his friends, and dispersed thro' the city an harangue, which makes, at this day, the thirtieth chapter of the Alcoran, entitled the Romans.

This chapter seems really to contain a manifest prophecy of a future event, little credible at the time he declared it: and it would even now supply matter for an important controversy between the Christians and Mahometans, were not the latter warned by the express text of the same chapter, never to dispute with Christians or Jews. In the meantime, the Christians, inclined by a natural propensity to contradict the notion which supposes the Alcoran to contain prophetick truths (particularly the Abbot Moracci, who has published a compleat refutation of it) have not failed to attack this prophecy with more of vehemence than conclusive argument. The Musulmen, on their side, avoid.

avoiding dispute, according as they are commanded, have kept silence; because indeed they embrace very few of our sentiments upon this subject, of which the proofs remain absolute, with respect to them. This is the reason we only find the ancient interpreters of the Alcoran, such as Galaleddin and Zamacshari, have advanced this prophecy as an authentick voucher of Mahomet's mission. Besides, they have fallen, on this occasion, into a fault too common with those who defend opinions with prepossession; not troubling themselves to exemplify the correspondence between the event and the promise; but being content to suppose, that since it is a prophecy, it must necessarily have had its accomplishment.

'Tis by a like anticipation almost, that we, ourselves remain ignorant of many truths relating to the completion of a great number of prophecies in the holy scriptures, the just application whereof would be as profitable for the confirmation of our faith, as for discovering the true use that GOD intended men should make of the prophecy at the time it was deliver'd; which, perhaps, was less for the support of a religion already settled by a positive law, and by the practice of many ages, than to correct some immoralities that had insinuated themselves into society. But the darkness of antiquity, and the sloth which restrains us from such enquiries as might enlighten it, and a disrelish of controversy, will always be obstacles superior to all the wishes that we can form upon this head. Again, it must be acknowledged, that if the Mahometans have taken little pains to demonstrate the accomplishment of this prophecy, the Christians,
for

for their part, have not been more earnest to prove that it has lain unfulfilled. They have satisfied themselves with talking of it with derision, without searching thorowly, whether there was, at that time, actual wars between the Greeks and Persians, as the Alcoran supposes. I think, therefore, before we proceed any farther, it is of some importance to examine the expressions of this pretended prophecy, and likewise the several chronological circumstances that may be of use in explaining it.

With regard to the prophecy itself, it runs in these words: "The Romans have been vanquished in our neighbourhood; but after their defeat, they shall conquer in their turn, at the distance of ten years. The reciprocal triumphs of two adversaries shall be the work of the Almighty, before, or after the term prescribed. In that day, the faithful shall rejoice; because they know that victory is only obtained by the assistance of the most high, omnipotent, merciful, and righteous. O promise of GOD! Thou art eternally infallible! Nor art thou ever resisted or contradicted, but by the impotent efforts of the wicked!" The rest of the chapter is extremely prophetical, and even singular for the choice and force of the expression, the beauty of the figures, and the variety and dignity of the thoughts. But as it has hardly any connection with the first seven verses, which they look upon as prophetick, and which, moreover, the author only employs as common places, as was usual with him in discourses wrought up on purpose to animate his auditors to piety and religion, there is no occasion to say any more about them.

As to the historical facts of that time, here is what may be gather'd from the best writers, Greek, Syriac, and Arabian: Tho' these last, such as Abol Faraghius and Utychius, agree not with the others in every particular of their history. They reckon the beginning of the reign of Cosroes king of Persia, from the year of our LORD five hundred eighty nine, but he had not the peaceable possession of his kingdom till ten years after; and the emperor Mauritius, his father-in-law, was dethron'd by Phocas, in the month of November, in the year six hundred and three; Cosroes enter'd into a war with the Romans in the year six hundred and four. He recovered from them Mesopotamia, all that they possessed in Armenia, with the cities of Dara, Amida, and Aleppo, which was the ancient Beroe. He continued this war after the death of Phocas, which happened in October six hundred and nine, and he conquered Syria in the year six hundred and fifteen, which is counted the twenty seventh of Cosroes's reign. This conquest render'd him master of Antioch, the ancient capital of the east, of Ephesus, of Balbeck, formerly called Heliopolis, of Damascus, then the biggest and richest city of the empire, of Cæsarea, and lastly of Jerusalem, from whence he removed the precious relict of the holy cross. 'Tis highly probable, then, that it was this celebrated conquest, which spread terror among all the Christians of Asia, and approached the skirts of Arabia; that Mahomet was desirous of mentioning at the beginning of this chapter, as an event which struck all the people with an equal dread, and threaten'd them with an absolute alteration of government;

ment; which, however, should not come to pass, as he there testifies.

The following year, the emperor Heraclius, believing he should not be able to preserve Egypt, nor what remained beyond Cilicia, resolved to draw from thence all the money he could. Many cities redeem'd themselves from his sovereignty, to submit themselves to the dominion of the Persians. And all that he had amassed together of gold and precious goods, he ship'd on board a fleet in the ports of Egypt, which was to transport to Constantinople this prodigious share of the riches of the east. But providence otherwise disposed of them; they met with a tempest which shatter'd the vessels, and drove them on the coast of Syria, where they were soon lighten'd of their several cargoes, the soldiers and mariners taken into bondage, and this immense treasure was conveyed to the proud Persian capital. As they owed all this treasure to a tempest, the Persians gave it the name of *Badaverd*, which literally signifies a present made by the wind. It was shut up under this title in one of the hundred vaults of the palace of *Madayen*; and 'tis said that it principally consisted of a vast quantity of gold as ductile and pliant as paste, which has made some chemists imagine that it was an artificial gold, manufactured in Egypt, the secret of making which, that was once common, is now lost, by means of *Dioctesian's* commanding all the books to be burnt that made any mention of it, in order to suppress the knowledge thereof. 'Twas perhaps with a prospect of the conquest the Musulmen should make with this treasure, and even of the city of *Madayen*, above

twenty years after this accident, that Mahomet declared the rejoycing of the faithful, that should come to pass on a certain day, which he does not express.

In the year six hundred and eighteen, Cosroes having recruited his armies, and the Greek emperor offering him no opposition, he made himself master of the keys of Egypt; so they called three places situated upon the canals which had been cut from Damietta to the celebrated port of Suez, that is at the extremity of the red sea. After which he seized upon Babylon; and, with the same facility, upon Alexandria; Heraclius having not relieved that city by sea as he might have done, the Persian monarch having no ships, nor any knowledge or experience of that kind. In short, conquests attending this victorious prince with still more ease, he entered the Pentapolis, and marching along the banks of the sea, he arrived at the gulph of the greater Syrtes, having driven the Romans and Greeks from every place they possessed. And thus it is properly to this prince that we are to ascribe the desolation and ruin of so many stately cities that formerly flourished upon this coast; of which nothing now remains but some melancholy traces which testify what once they were.

In six hundred and nineteen, Cosroes returned from this expedition across the sands of Nubia, in imitation of Alexander. He was wholly intent upon recruiting his forces; by which means, the next year he saw himself at the head of three armies, which acting in different places at the same time, forced the passages of Cilicia, and those of the rivers that defended the lower Asia, so that all those countries were expos'd

to

to the victor. He even advanced to the Bosphorus, having possessed himself of all the great cities, and having taken possession of Chalcedon in the very sight of the emperor, who beheld himself imprisoned within the walls of Constantinople, and reduced to submit to the hardest conditions of a peace that the conqueror was very ready to grant him; but at the expence of paying him hereafter a tribute of a thousand talents of gold, and an immense sum for defraying the charges of the war at several different payments. But as the obtaining these sums was an infinite difficulty, Constantine, the emperor's eldest son, and his colleague in the empire, obtained liberty to run over the cities of Asia, Syria, and Armenia, to engage their contributions according to their respective capacities towards these stipulated disbursements. But instead of executing this treaty, which had been extorted by necessity, he apply'd himself to nothing but the levying of troops, and forming an army in order to invade Persia in his own person.

But as this undertaking could not be soon executed, the Persian prince stayed three whole years at Chalcedon, waiting patiently for his return, and during that space Heraclius punctually paid him the tribute agreed on, out of the revenues of his other dominions, with which Cosroes maintained his army. But being tired at length, and receiving some informations of what was plotting against him, he then perceived the fault he had been guilty of, in not providing vessels for transporting his forces into Greece, and in not having made himself master of Constantinople, and of the very person of the emperor himself. He would

have repaired it then, by seizing the city or island of Rhodes, where all the emperor's naval forces lay, but it was too late. The news of the irruption of the Romans into Persia, and their great successes, obliged Cosroes to abandon his conquests, and hasten to succour his Persian dominions. His eldest son had even gone over to his father's enemies, under pretence of Cosroes's male-administration of government, in abandoning his kingdom to the invasions of foreigners, tho' the principal view of this unnatural son was to accelerate a succession after which he aspired. The unfortunate king strove to regain Persia, by marching at a prodigious rate; but pursued by Heraclius, and intercepted by Constantine, he was necessitated to engage with two enemies extremely incensed. He lost this battle precisely in the fifteenth year of Heraclius, which corresponds to the year six hundred twenty five of the Christian Æra; just ten years after the prophecy which had given the victory to the Romans. This unhappy monarch struggled against fortune for two years longer, till being again stopt by the cruel orders of his own son, he was at last murdered in prison, in the thirty eighth year of his reign, which is coincident with the year of our LORD six hundred twenty six or twenty seven. The people of the east regard this royal Persian, thus ruined, as one of the most extraordinary instances of the fantastick extravagances of fortune; since no prince had ever experienced so much adversity in the beginning of his reign, nor a more sad catastrophe at the conclusion of his life and empire; neither was there ever any monarch of the

the gorgeous east, that advanced to such an height the splendor of those immense riches he once possessed.

These were the events in the Persian and Roman monarchies, that seem to have some reference to the pretended prophecy now in question. I have already shewn, that the Christians and Mahometans differ in their judgment about it (since the latter believe it most true, and the former call it most false) yet they agree in this, namely, that neither the one nor the other produce the least proof for their opposite opinions: Zamacshari affirms, with reason, that none but an inspired prophet could have known a future event so contrary to the expectation of men, and the probability of the promised success. But he does not tell us what event he means. Galaledin disputes about the place where the Romans were defeated, and endeavours to prove, by the propriety of the terms in which the prophecy is couched, that the battle must have been fought in Arabia. Ebn-Abbas pretends, on the contrary, that these very terms are to be understood of the borders of Jordan, that is, of Palestine, or at least of the region of Damascus. A fourth interpreter magnifies its chosen terms, because they are not equivocal, but perfectly intelligible, with respect both to the facts and dates of the predicted event. In the mean time, another of them explains the whole of the battle of Hadibia; and again, another of the war of Beder, which were particular actions of Mahomet, and which bear no relation either to the words of the prophecy, or the dates therein expressed, and still less to the affairs of the Romans and Persians. So that we may very rightly

infer, that their ignorance of history, and of the real application that might have been made of this prophecy, to one particular event, altogether unknown to these authors, was the cause of this contrariety in their opinions.

However, Maracci has not attack'd their notions with more skill than honesty. Transported with the prejudice of most controversial writers, he thought 'twas wounding the christian and catholick truths to allow the least probability to the opinions of their adversaries; and so he only applied himself to take advantage of the diversity of sentiments among the commentators, and fails not to conclude, that if the prophecy did contain any truth, yet there was no certainty at all in the application of it. I confess, indeed, that this reasoning persuades not me, in any degree; because 'tis of much less importance in such disquisitions, barely to stop the mouth of an antagonist, than to examine effectually where the truth lies, which alone ought to determine our judgment. And thus I thought myself obliged to enter into a particular recital of the historical facts, which may instruct us (for only they can do it) in the proper application of the words of Mahomet. Now history informs us, as we have seen, that the Romans having been constantly routed and vanquished by the Persians, from the year of our LORD six hundred and fifteen, to the year six hundred and twenty five; they then regained their former superiority, and became the conquerors of their terrible enemies, by such an unhop'd for turn of fortune as no history can parallel. Again, it is remarkable that the interval of ten years, pre-
scribed

scribed by Mahomet between the defeat and the victory, is exactly fulfilled between six hundred and fifteen, and six hundred and twenty five. Therefore, it must be acknowledged, that if the thirtieth chapter of the Alcoran was really composed and publish'd in the year six hundred and fifteen, there could be no disagreement about the accomplishment of the prophecy therein contained.

But after all, I am very far from granting Mahomet, in consequence of this acknowledgment, the gift of prophecy, for authorizing his pretended mission. For first, here is only one adventurous expression, which, not being strengthened in the same book, by more prophecies of the like nature, cannot amount to a compleat proof. Secondly, it is no extraordinary thing, that a very vivacious imagination, the rich fund of a multiplicity of images and expressions extremely singular, being also inflamed with mighty objects, and quickened with the most touching and enlivening interest, should sometimes hit upon certain truths, which seem to be presented to the mind, rather by chance than reflection.

Thus Mahomet, the greatest and finest orator of his age, in an enthusiastick rapture, fancied he descry'd in the womb of futurity, an event, which in itself was only possible, since the fortune of arms is continually fickle. And he afterwards declared it with a boldness, the genuine production of a fanatical persuasion. But it is an indubitable proof, that even he himself had no notion of any such prophecy, in as much as after the accomplishment of it, he appears to have made no manner of use of it to any

purpose whatsoever, but e'en left to his successors the care of making the most of it. Finally, we must not forget to observe here, that this is the only exprefs and formal prophecy contained in the whole Alcoran; for tho' many more are ascribed to Mahomet, yet being only recorded in those collections of his actions and sayings that were compiled after his death, they are by no means of equal authority with the book of his revelations.

THE
LIFE
OF
MAHOMET.

BOOK III.

Containing the Life of the pretended Prophet, from
the first Hegira to his Death.



It is necessary to acquaint the reader, that the relation of the Count de Boulainvilliers ends here. Neither the same style, nor peculiar reflections of the two first books will be met with in this continuation. I shall only relate, with all possible clearness and brevity, the different events of history, such as I find them in Abul-Feda, Prideaux, the abbot Maracci, Herbelot, and others, who have written concerning this impostor.

Our author left Mahomet on ill terms with the people of Mecca, who being offended with his pretended mission from GOD, and with the doctrine he taught, doubted whether they should punish him with death or banishment. The crafty prophet found means to appease them at that time, as well by the bold and extravagant answers he gave to those questions they proposed to him, as by the interposition of his uncle Abu-Taleb. But notwithstanding the credit of this venerable magistrate at Mecca, he could not hinder the Korashites disturbing the disciples of his nephew, as often as they found opportunity. Being thus continually exposed to the insolence and ridicule of their fellow citizens, sixteen of them, who were without families, resolved to seek, in another country, that tranquillity which was deny'd them in their own *. Mahomet, who chiefly desired to place his creatures in different regions, and to extend his doctrine, readily granted them a permission to depart, which he also joined with necessary instructions, and with a letter for the king of Ethiopia, in whose court his persecuted disciples were to seek protection. This prince was at that time a Christian, and whether it was from a motive of charity, or in deference to the recommendations of the prophet, he made these fugitives so welcome, that the news reached Mecca, and induced many others of them to take the same journey; so that in the end a good number of Musulmen lived under his government. This is that epocha which the Mahometans celebrate to this day under the name of the first Hegira.

* Year the fifth of the prophet's mission, and the 45th of his age.

But

But these very people of Mecca, who in the beginning would have banished the first converts of Mahomet, no sooner knew they were in Ethiopia, than they sent two of their citizens, Abdollah, and Amrus, to demand them of the king. In the notes of M. Ganier on Abul-Feda, are certain particulars of that deputation, viz. That these envoys being arriv'd in Ethiopia, represented to the king, that the persons they came to demand of him were certain mean enthusiasts, who suffer'd themselves to be possess'd with the doctrine of a man who called himself the Apostle of GOD: That if the king was inclined to satisfy himself of the extravagance of their opinions, he need only command them into his presence, and he would be convinced how entirely superstitious their doctrine was, by their refusing to prostrate themselves before him: That indeed the Musulmen did accordingly refuse to prostrate themselves before him, telling him, they had discontinued that custom, since GOD had raised up a prophet who taught them the only proper manner of approaching their superiors; and that the king acknowledged their practice was according to the law and the gospel. The same author adds, that after a great dispute between the envoys of Mecca and the fugitives, upon a certain point of their doctrine, Giafar, the son of Abu-Taleb, mentioned the Alcoran to the king, as a book not unlike to that of Isa (or Jesus) the son of Mary, which raising the curiosity of the king, he assembled his clergy, and demanded of them, if the sacred writings did not predict a prophet to follow Jesus Christ. The bishops and priests answered, that Jesus Christ himself foretold
the

the same. But the people of Mecca, loth to be foil'd, assured the king, that the disciples of Mahomet spoke with disrespect of Jesus and of his mother. The king demanding what it was they said of them, the Musulmen, in justification of themselves, read to him the 19th chapter of the Alcoran, which is intituled Mary. In conclusion, the king was affected to such a degree with the beauty of their doctrine, and the reading certain passages out of the Alcoran, that melting into tenderness, both himself and clergy, he made publick profession of Mahometanism, and became an avow'd and zealous defender thereof.

However this fact was, the envoys of Mecca return'd without having obtained any thing of king Atzam; but to recompence themselves for the fatigue and expence of this fruitless journey, they persuaded the Korashites to make a treaty with the other tribes of the Arabians, by which they obliged themselves not to contract any alliance with the descendants of Hashem and Abdol-Motallab, and never to have communication with them. By this decree, the relations of Mahomet, even those who hitherto opposed his opinions, were obliged to leave Mecca, and to retire to the possessions of Abu-Taleb, a little distance from the city. Accompany'd with some of his disciples, Mahomet passed in this exile the sixth, seventh, eighth, and ninth years of his mission. It was about this time that thirty Musulmen, who had retired to Ethiopia, were returning to Mecca, upon a false rumour spread among them, that the people of Mecca were become Musulmen. But being better inform'd, as they approached nearer the city, they not only understood

derstood the inhabitants adhered to their ancient religion, but that they had driven out the principal persons of the new sect by a solemn treaty. This news obliged the greatest part to return back; and those who were so hardy as to venture into Mecca, kept themselves carefully concealed.

In the tenth year of the mission of the prophet, the people of Mecca abrogated the treaty they had made three years before, and according to the accounts of the Musulmen authors, it was from the following motive they did it. One day Mahomet discoursing with his uncle Abu-Taleb, told him, among other things, that the injurious decree of the Korashites made against the tribe of Hashem did no longer subsist, and that by the miraculous permission of GOD, a little worm had destroy'd it, and had only left those parts of it where the name of GOD was express'd. Upon this Abu-Taleb sought out the Korashites and represented to them, that if the decree was really destroyed, they ought to acknowledge the singular protection with which GOD had favour'd his nephew, and remove the effects of their hatred to him. The people of Mecca actually resorted to the Kaaba, where the decree was deposited, and having found it to be entirely destroyed, after a short deliberation, they dissolved it.

This year Mahomet lost two persons who were very dear to him, Abu-Taleb, his uncle, and his wife Cadijah. Abu-Taleb was about eighty three years old when he died. During his sickness, Mahomet continually exhorted him to repeat that profession of faith, which to this day distinguishes his disciples,
viz,

viz. "There is no other GOD but GOD: and
 "Mahomet is the messenger of GOD." The
 dying old man excused himself from pronouncing
 these words, for fear, said he, the Korashites should
 attribute the change of my opinion to the dread of
 death. But some moments before he expired, he got
 over that objection, and one of those who were pre-
 sent, assured the prophet he heard his uncle pronounce
 distinctly those words which he had directed him to
 repeat.

This conversion, as uncertain as it was, filled the
 soul of Mahomet with consolation, and with acknow-
 ledgment toward GOD, who was pleased to en-
 lighten the best and most powerful friend of his pro-
 phet. The death of Cadijah, that generous woman,
 who laid the first foundation of Mahomet's fortune,
 in making him sharer of her great riches, immedi-
 ately followed that of Abu-Taleb; and Mahomet
 paid to the memory of that beloved wife all the sor-
 row which the most tender and most grateful heart
 was capable of.

But Abu-Sophian, the greatest enemy of the pro-
 phet, being possessed of the chief authority in Mec-
 ca, by the death of Abu-Taleb, this was a circum-
 stance inconvenient to the projects of Mahomet, and
 which incited the Korashites in such a manner against
 him (who till then were restrained by the powerful
 influence of Abu-Taleb) that they began to oppose
 themselves vigorously to the great progress Mahome-
 tanism had made in Mecca, and the country adjacent.
 And they succeeded so well, that many of the pro-
 phet's disciples, perceiving that they had no prospect of
 ad-

advantage by continuing with him, but on the contrary, being possessed with the fear of losing all, they forsook him and his new religion.

But Mahomet was not a man to be dispirited; the difficulties he met with served to animate his courage, and render him more circumspect. And perceiving the people of Mecca so strongly prejudiced against his doctrine, he thought proper to yield for the present, and wait for a more favourable opportunity of converting them. He therefore left them, and came to Tayif, a city sixty miles from thence; here he hoped to make proselytes, and find a protection against the persecutions of the people of Mecca. To that end he published his opinions, in several publick discourses; which, instead of succeeding, drew upon him so much insolence and raillery, that it obliged him to leave that stubborn place. From thence he returned to Mecca, the conversion of which was never out of his mind; his zeal for that event, so necessary to the establishing his other projects, nothing could abate. He continually exhorted his fellow citizens to abandon their idolatrous worship, and embrace his religion, the principal tenets of which were, the unity of GOD and the truth of his own mission.

* His preaching was not always in vain: among others there became of his party six of the city of Yathreb, which was afterwards called Medina. These new believers were of the tribe of the Chazragites, and the city inhabited by Jews, Christians, and Arabians, experienced those inconvenient effects, which commonly arise in a state that contains people

* Year the 11th of the prophet's mission.

of

of different religions, and different originals. Mahomet was too artful not to take advantage of these discentions; he first of all contrived to gain the esteem of these new profelytes, which was not difficult for a person of his insinuating genius to accomplish, especially since he had in a manner already persuaded them into the belief of his doctrine. In this attempt he succeeded so well, that these Yathrebites, at their return home, were lavish in the praise of Mahomet and his principles; so that when himself came amongst them, he found a great number strongly prejudiced in his favour. These persons were afterwards called Ansars, or Auxiliaries, because indeed they were very useful to the designs of Mahomet, and received him into their city when he could find no other place of safety. M. Gagnier observes, that these were idolaters before they embraced Mahometanism, and not Christians, as Dr. Prideaux believes.

Mahometanism had hitherto made but slow advances, which would have spread considerably, could the false prophet have satisfied people in the article of miracles, which they continually demanded of him as a proof of the truth of his mission. It was to no purpose he asserted his familiar conversation with the angel Gabriel, and that the Alcoran was a book beyond the capacities of mortal men, or even of Angels to compose; and consequently he could only have it by means of an immediate revelation from GOD: the people of Mecca still returned to their demand of miracles, and insisted they should be performed publicly, and without deceit.

At last †, when he was pressed so closely, that he knew not what to reply, they tell us he feigned a journey from Mecca to Jerusalem, and from thence to Heaven, where he received from the mouth of GOD himself, that law which he would establish in the world : But it is improbable that Mahomet, altogether an impostor as he was, should think proper to invent a fable full of absurdities and contradictions, and those the most evident; besides the Alcoran makes not the least mention of any one of those circumstances with which the interpreters accompany this journey. The chapter intitled the Nocturnal journey, begins indeed with these words, “ In the name of GOD, clement and merciful, praised be his name, who conducted his prophet by night from the temple of Mecca to Jerusalem.” The rest contains precepts on the unity of the Supreme Being, of morality, threatenings of the judgments of GOD against the wicked, reproaches upon the people of Mecca who required miracles, and matters of the like nature. But as the Musulmen have a veneration for tradition, that which is related of this pretended journey, found credit with the people, and is at this day look’d upon as the best foundation on which Mahomet has built his religion.

Nevertheless the greatest part of the Musulman doctors have not scrupled to teach, that this relation is to be understood in a mystical sense, and at most as a vision with which GOD vouchsafed to honour the prophet. Some authors maintain, that as soon as Mahomet returned from his journey, he related

† Year the 12th of the prophet’s mission.

the story of it publickly, with all its circumstances, to all who would hear him, and that the extravagance of this relation discredited him so much at Mecca, that more than a thousand persons forsook his party. They add, that Abu-Beker came in good time to stop this revolt, and animate by his example, those disciples wavering to embrace a truth which would make their faith so meritorious.

Allowing this to be fact, this desertion was in good measure recompensed to Mahomet, in the honourable title of Chief, solemnly conferred upon him by twelve of the Ansars, who in consequence of it, swore to him faith and allegiance as to the apostle of GOD; and obliged themselves to take up arms to maintain his interest as often as he should require them. He obliged them also to make oath for their wives, and to engage, "that they should join nothing with GOD in his worship, that they should not steal, that they should not commit fornication, and that they should not murder their children." After this formality, he appointed one of his disciples, Mosaab, the son of Omar, to instruct them in his religion. Mosaab being arrived at Medina, was at first suspected by the prince of the country for a spy; but having cleared himself of that accusation, and reading to the prince some verses out of the Alcoran, he became an illustrious proselyte, who brought over to the side of Mahomet a great number of the inhabitants.

Hitherto Mahomet thought proper only to preach a doctrine, which, true or false, did not directly affect the government of the state; but in the thirteenth

teenth year of his mission he altered his pretences ; and this prophet, who at first declared he was sent by Heaven merely to bring mankind back to the true worship of GOD, and that he could use no other defence against the persecutions of his enemies, but an invincible patience ; this prophet, I say, we shall behold concerting measures to raise war upon his country, and asserting the positive commands of GOD to extirpate all those who will not believe in him, or will not submit to his obedience. He then thought proper to confirm to himself again the fidelity of his disciples : And at this time a great number of the Ansars being come to Mecca, to accompany Mosaab their missionary, he required a new oath of them, by which they obliged themselves to defend him with the same zeal as they would defend their wives and children. And Mahomet, on his part, promised he would never forsake them, and that if they should happen to lose their lives for their affection to him, he promised them the enjoyment of paradise, as a recompence of their valour and faith. It is with regard to this circumstance that the ninth, forty seventh, and the sixty sixth chapters of the Alcoran are written, where the prophet introduces GOD, who commands him to put all the infidels to the sword, and promises amply to recompense the valour of those who shall be found brave and faithful in so good a cause.

After this proceeding of Mahomet with the Ansars, which argued a formed design to take up arms, it cannot be supposed he could continue at Mecca in safety. He then contrived how to manage his departure,

parture, to which he was before determined, thro' the importunity of his friends, and particularly of his uncle Al-Abbas. This Al-Abbas, who had often, but in vain, endeavoured to persuade his nephew to depart, at length finding these Ansars, of whom we have already spoken, and representing to them, that if they had any true affection for the person of their new instructor, they ought to provide for his safety, to carry him with them, and give him a retreat in their own city: the Ansars imagining themselves greatly honoured by the presence of so extraordinary a person in their city, invited him to go along with them, and upon this occasion renewed their former oath to him. But Mahomet, before he left Mecca, affected to imitate the Messiah in the institution of the apostles; he therefore chose twelve persons from among the Ansars, upon whom he conferred the necessary authority to govern and instruct his disciples, and those who in time should become such. After this ceremony, he commanded them to depart together with all his disciples for the city of Yathreb. But he remained sometime at Mecca with Abu-Beker and Ali, and did not depart till GOD permitted him by an immediate revelation to leave the city.

‡ But the Korashites, unwilling Mahomet should escape, selected a man out of each tribe to assassinate him, so that each of them might give him a wound, to the end, said they, that his blood might be equally upon all the tribes; and that vengeance could not be taken, but in attacking them all. The prophet being apprized of this conspiracy, he commanded Ali to lie in his bed, to cover himself with his green robe,

‡ The first year of the Hegira.

that

that Ali might be taken for him, and that it should be said at the door, the prophet was sick and reposed himself. This contrivance succeeded, and Mahomet retired during the time his enemies waited his rising to destroy him. They were the better deceived by this artifice; because looking thro' the crevices of the door, and seeing the prophet's garment, they doubted not but it was him. Afterwards coming out to those who thirsted after his life, he took up a handful of dust, and throwing it into the air, he blinded them in such a manner that they could not see him. As soon as the prophet was out of danger, Ali arose, and the Korashites perceiving their mistake, suffered him to depart without offering him any injury. Abu-Beker intreated Mahomet he might bear him company, and they two departed with an Arabian, an idolater, for their guide, who led them to the mountain of Thaur, where they lay hid for the space of three days. Ali was order'd to stay a few days behind them, to deliver back those trusts which were deposited in the hands of Mahomet.

The prophet found it difficult to escape the diligent pursuit of the people of Mecca, they followed hard after him, and one of them having discovered the fugitives, Abu-Beker thought himself lost: But Mahomet, not at all disconcerted, called the pursuer by his name, and presently his horse fell down to the ground. The Korashite, astonished at this accident, intreated the prayers of the prophet, who immediately commanded the horse to arise. But he no sooner saw himself out of danger, but he again attempted to pursue Mahomet, who again caused the horse to fall down,

down, and afterwards raised him again as before. At last finding he tired himself in vain, he returned, and persuaded those who came with him likewise to return back to Mecca. It is from this flight of Mahomet the Hegira begins, that is the Epocha of the Mahometans, which was fixed by Omar, occasioned by a dispute arising between two persons concerning a bill or note, about which the parties could not agree.

Mahomet arrived at Medina, and lay with his wife Ayesha, for the first time, whom he betrothed three years before, but had not yet enjoy'd her, because of her extreme youth. He afterwards built him a house, that he might take all the liberty that was sufficient for him to project in tranquillity, the execution of his vast designs. He also erected a mosque near Medina, where the Mahometan religion was first celebrated; and the better to cement his party, he established a fraternity among his disciples, by which every particular was commanded to chuse a friend, and call him his brother.

Mahomet having now * more quiet at Medina than he could have at Mecca, he began to institute certain ceremonies of religion. It was a custom among the people in the east to turn themselves in their prayers towards a certain point of the Heavens. — Thus the Jews turn'd themselves towards Jerusalem; the Arabians towards the temple of Mecca, and the Sabians towards the north star. The false prophet, in the beginning of his mission, when he prayed, turned himself towards Jerusalem. But he altered this custom as well to accommodate himself to that venerable idea, which the Ara-

* The second year of the Hegira.

• bians have always retained for the temple of Mecca, as to be entirely different from the ceremonies of the Jews; commanding his followers to turn their faces towards the Kaaba, as to a place distinguished from all others, by the presence of the Almighty.

This year he instituted the fast of Ramadan, in imitation of the great fast of expiation among the Jews; he also ordained the manner of calling the faithful to prayer from the top of the tower of a mosque, in these words, which were sent him from Heaven. "GOD is great; GOD is great; there is no other GOD but GOD; there is no other GOD but GOD; Mahomet is the apostle of GOD."

Whilst the prophet pretended to have no other views than the instruction of the people, and their eternal welfare, he revolved in his mind those vast designs which his ambition had formed. And to put them in execution, he now thought it time to add force and violence to reasons and persuasions. To this end he commanded his disciples to prepare for war, and put to the sword all those who rejected his doctrine, or at least such who would not submit to redeem their lives with an annual tribute. This barbarous order was so far from meeting with opposition from the Arabians, when Mahomet had made them sensible of the greatness of the booty, that they strove who should go the first, and the ostnest to these kind of wars, which were carried on by his direction the rest of his life. Their first capture was a caravan, which belonged to the merchants of Mecca, taken by nine Ansars. This first prize was brought to Medina with two prisoners.

Here begins the first wars of Mahomet, sometimes with the Korashites, sometimes with the tribes of the Jews, dispersed throughout Arabia, the greatest part of which wars appear very inconsiderable, and were rather like the ravages of thieves, than military expeditions, conducted with art, and founded upon justice. The first of these wars is called Beder, from a well which was discovered in the place where the combat began. The prophet having intelligence that Abu-Sophian was returning from Syria, with a caravan of thirty men, laid some of his troops in ambush to attack him. But the Korashite being advertised of this, informed those of his tribe of his danger, who marched with all expedition, nine hundred foot and one hundred horse to his assistance. The forces of Mahomet were much inferior to these, his whole muster being but one hundred and thirteen soldiers, to give these idolaters battle. But this disproportion only served to enflame his courage. He marched this handful of men in full confidence of their valour, and they followed him firm in the opinion that the almighty power of GOD would supply with invisible armies the weakness of that of his prophet. So that it is not very astonishing, that being possessed of these persuasions, the troops of Mahomet should be victorious in this battle, which, tho' it seemed inconsiderable, was in a manner the foundation of all the rest of their conquests; by reason of that terror it spread among the Korashites, and that intrepidity with which it inspired the soldiers of Mahomet, who believed they had nothing to fear since GOD had so visibly declared himself their protector.

But

But altho' Mahomet would have it thought he expected victory alone from Heaven, yet he failed not to observe those rules which prudence and the military art direct. As soon as he understood the approach of Abu-Sophian, he possessed himself of a place refreshed with water, and having pitched his tent there, he waited the coming of the enemy with great resolution. The two armies being met, three Korashites advanced before the rest, and defy'd the same number of the Mahometans to a single combat. Mahomet himself appointed three of his own troops to meet them (of whose valour and dexterity he had much experience) who killed the three idolaters. After this combat of the champions, the two armies attacked each other vigorously. Victory at first seem'd to favour Abu-Sophian, but at last it entirely changed to the side of Mahomet. He remained in his tent at prayer for the success of that day, which would in a manner determine his own fate, and the establishment of his religion. But as soon as he saw his troops began to retire, he run out to them, put himself at their head, and throwing sand into the eyes of his enemies, he pronounced these words with an air of assurance, "Let their countenances be troubled and confounded:" And charging them briskly, he put them to flight. There were not above seventy men killed, and about as many prisoners taken on the side of Abu-Sophian, and fourteen of the soldiers of the prophet. But amongst this small number of the Korashites, twenty four of them were chiefs of the people of Mecca, persons eminent for their birth and valour, and the greater number of them relations of the prophet,

phet, or of his wife Cadijah. The people of Mecca were terrified with the news of this defeat, who flatter'd themselves they should at once have destroyed Mahomet and his designs. Abu-Laheb, so great an enemy of the prophet, that there is in the Alcoran a chapter full of curses against him, died of sorrow. History relates, that Mahomet finding among the prisoners a certain person named Al-Nadhr, who had despised him and his religion some years before, he with a revenge unworthy a great mind, cut off his head, because the man had said the Alcoran was a book full of old women's stories. Okba, the son of Abumoa suffer'd the same fate.

But when the booty came to be divided, it occasion'd great contention in the army of the prophet, as it was composed of the people of Mecca, who had followed Mahomet and the inhabitants of Medina, firnamed Ansars; one party pretended a right to a greater share than the other. To appease this difference the whole weight of their leader's authority was necessary, seconded with a new chapter of the Alcoran, which he pretended was dispatched to him upon that occasion, wherein God commanded Mahomet to take the fifth part of the spoil to himself, and divide the rest equally among his soldiers.

After having in this manner re-united the affections of his army, he marched against certain Jews of the tribe of Kainokan, who, as Mahomet alledged, had violated a treaty he had made with them some time before. The prophet held them so closely besieged for fifteen days in their forts, that they surrender'd at discretion. Their goods were confiscated to the use
of

of the conquerors, and they would have attoned with the loss of their heads their crime of infidelity, of which they were accused, had not an idolatrous prisoner begged their lives of the prophet by the meer force of importunity.

Abu-Sophian, resolved to revenge the defeat at Beder, took the field with two hundred horse, but he did not think fit to abide the coming of Mahomet, who already was on his march to fight him.

The third year of the Hegira he made two expeditions, one against the Solaimites, and the Gaftanites, and the other against the Persians. The first betook themselves to flight as soon as they knew Mahomet was come to attack them; the other were put to flight and routed, after a very obstinate engagement. Mahomet had a daughter called Phatima, concerning whose miraculous conception the Mahometans tell abundance of stories, which the abbot Marracci will have pass for so many articles of their faith. She at this time married Ali, one of the chiefs of Mahomet's little army, and his faithful friend.

In this year was fought the famous battle of Ohud. The Korashites raised an army of three thousand foot (seven hundred of which were armed with cuirasses) and two hundred horse. Abu-Sophian was appointed commander; and to animate his soldiers, he brought with him his mother and many other women, who carried drums, such as were used by the Arabians. These women accompanied with their voices the sound of this warlike instrument, in honour of the memory of those who were slain at the battle of Beder. The prophet doubted a long time whether he should meet

this army, very numerous in comparison of his own, or keep himself shut up within Medina; he resolved upon the first, and advancing with nine hundred foot, to a place situate upon the mountain Ohud, there he posted himself to the best advantage, and after having selected fifty archers to shelter the rest, he gave them battle. The prophet's uncle Hamza signalized his courage in killing the standard-bearer of the idolaters, and was himself slain by an Abissin slave as he was stripping the dead carcase of him whom he had just killed.

But the archers, too greedy of plunder, kept not their posts; and in leaving them, gave opportunity to him who commanded the right wing of the idolaters to fall upon the Mahometans with his horse. In the midst of this terror and confusion a sudden outcry arose that the prophet was slain; which disordered his troops to such a degree, that they in every part of the battle gave ground to their enemies. Mahomet himself received two wounds, by two strokes of a stone, one of which struck out some of his fore-teeth, and the other scratched his face. On the side of the Musulmen seventy men were killed, and twenty on that of Abu-Sophian.

Thus all the advantage was on the part of the latter, who might (one would imagine) have made a better use of the disorder of his enemy's army, and the superiority of his own; whereas he only demanded a truce of Mahomet for all the following year.

The principal concern of Mahomet, after the retreat of the enemy, was to search out the dead bodies of the slain; he affected upon that occasion a tenderness

derne's and piety more becoming a father than a general, he approached the bodies of each of his dead friends, and prayed respectively for the repose of their souls. But he conceived so great indignation at the barbarous manner with which the mother of Abu-Sophian, and the rest of the women had mangled the carcases of the slain, and principally that of his uncle Hamza, that he could not be comforted till after he had received a revelation, assuring him of an equal revenge upon thirty Korashites.

The loss of the battle of Ohud gave rise to a great many murmurs; they demanded of Mahomet how it could happen that GOD should permit the defenders of the truth and of his religion to fall a sacrifice to their enemies. Others lamented the loss of their relations and their friends, and seemed to repent their having engaged too inconsiderately on the side of the prophet. Mahomet soon found answers to these complaints. To the first he said, they ought to attribute their late defeat to the sins of some of them who followed him; that GOD in this manner separated the good from the wicked, in order to shew with more exactness, who were the truly faithful: and to stop the murmurs of the others, he laid before them the doctrine of predestination; by which he represented to them, that their friends would certainly have died had they not been in the battle, since their days, as well as those of the rest of mankind, were so exactly numbered, that no precaution could be used to increase them. It is owing to this opinion, and the firm persuasion of becoming martyrs, that even to this day the Musulmen confront the greatest dangers with intrepidity.

trepidity. We may impute it to this persuasion, that Mahomet and his successors gain'd such rapid conquests. Nothing considerable happened the rest of the third year of the Hegira, except only that the inhabitants of the cities of Edhlo and Alcara, pretending an inclination to understand the Mahometan religion, sent deputies to the prophet to desire he would permit one of his disciples to teach them: and Mahomet having appointed six for that purpose, these perfidious people cut the throats of part of them, and sold the others at Mecca.

In the beginning of the fourth year of the Hegira, Mahomet lost seventy Ansars, that he sent, tho' against his will, to the prince of Naged, to invite him and his subjects to embrace Mahometanism. This prince, far from accepting the proposition, executed him who brought the message, and then marching in person against the rest, he put all to the sword, except Caab, who, after having been supposed to be dead, brought the news to Medina.

Mahomet served his purposes much better with the Jews of Nadhir; for after having held them besieged in their forts for some days, he obliged them to capitulate and retire, with this only permission, viz. to carry no more of their goods along with them, than they could load upon one camel. The rest of the booty was appropriated to himself, by virtue of another chapter of the Alcoran, expressly sent him from Heaven. Historians relate, that the use of wine, and all games of chance, were forbidden this year, but they do not agree about the reason of this prohibition; which some attribute to a violent contention arising
among

among the foldiers, through an exceſſive indulgence in theſe diverſions; and others to Mahomet's reflecting on the terrible effects of a particular debauch of drinking, when after having paſſed the preceding day in a houſe with his companions, in the utmoſt joy, he found there the next morning a great conſternation, occaſioned by a quarrel which had ariſen among them. But it is not at all neceſſary to have recourſe to either of theſe ſtories for the occaſion of this prohibition. The falſe prophet knew well enough how much inclined the Arabians were to theſe debauches, neither could he be ignorant of the terrible effects of the abuſe of wine, more eſpecially in hot climates, and in an army always in motion.

The defeat of the ſeventy Anſars in the province of Naged, was too recent a provocation for Mahomet ſoon to forget. Reſolved to be revenged, he took the field. But he found only a troop of Gaſtanites, who ran away as ſoon as they underſtood his approach. One among them was ſo daring as to ſteal into the camp of Mahomet, pretending curioſity, and deſiring the prophet to let him view his ſabre: Mahomet not ſcrupling to gratify him, and the Gaſtanite having it in his hand, he drew it with a deſign to kill him; but an inviſible power ſtruck to the earth this raſh idolater, and preſerved the prophet. About the end of the year Mahomet waited the approach of Abu-Sophian, at the ſame place where he had gained the victory of Beder; but ſoon after he returned to Medina, having underſtood his enemy had marched back to Mecca, after having advanced as far as a place called Aſhaol-Tariz.

Abu-Sophian's return †, no doubt, was with design to prepare that great army, with which he took the field the next year against the Musulmen, which consisted of several tribes of Jews, Kenanites, Gaftanites, and Korashites, that in all made a body of ten thousand men. So great a force terrified the Musulmen, and the prophet himself appeared somewhat apprehensive, so that he thought fit to intrench himself; which art of intrenching was first taught the Arabians by Salman a Persian.

The making of the intrenchment, according to Abul-Feda, gave rise to four great miracles. By the first, the prophet softened with a little water, a very great and hard stone, which hindered the pioneers from working: By the second he satisfied all the workmen with a few dried dates, gathered by a young damsel: By the third, all those workmen were fed with a little barley bread and a very lean sheep, which a certain person had made ready for Mahomet: The fourth was the prediction of the conquest of Yamen, of Syria, of the eastern Asia, and Africa, by three sparks of fire falling from a hammer with which he struck the ground.

But to return to the expedition of Abu-Sophian, which was afterwards called the war of the ditch. The idolaters held Mahomet and his army besieged twenty days; during which time several skirmishes passed, but so inconsiderable that Mahomet lost in them but six men. Amrus, who was reputed the best horseman of his time, being desirous to give the two armies proof of his skill and of his courage, rode full

† The fifth year of the Hegira.

speed

speed to the brink of the intrenchment of the Musulmen, and invited the bravest among them to a single combat. Ali, although his nephew, accepted the challenge; but before they fought they swore to have no regard to the ties of blood or to mercy. In a word, they fought so vigorously, that the dust they raised in the combat obscured them from the views of the two armies. At last the presumptuous infidel sunk under the dexterity and strength of the Musulman; and the son-in-law of the prophet bore away the glory of the combat. The death of Amrus forerun the entire defeat of the army of Abu-Sophian. So very remarkable a victory (according to the Musulmen) that GOD himself, to spare the blood of the faithful soldiers of Mahomet, procured it them by a violent wind that overturned the tents and preparations of the Korashites, and obliged them and their allies to fly to their own countries with confusion. Mahomet gave the whole glory of his conquest to GOD, whom he introduces speaking these words in a passage of the Alcoran, "O you who have believed, remember " the favour GOD shewed you when legions prepared " themselves in battle against you. I raised against them " a mighty wind, and in your defence I armed an host " of Angels, tho' to you they were invisible." The artful prophet lost nothing by attributing to the Supreme Being the advantages he gained over his enemies; but confirmed his soldiers the more in the persuasion, that GOD would work in their favour the greatest miracles, to procure them the victory wherever they should face their enemies. Dr. Prideaux attributes the defeat of Abu-Sophian to the secret

practices of Mahomet, by which, according to this historian, he corrupted the chief among the Korashites, who, while Ali and Amrus were fighting, took advantage of the attention of the two armies to this spectacle, to go over to the camp of Mahomet. But Abul-Feda only says, there was a disunion in the army of Abu-Sophian, without mentioning these deserters.

If Abu-Sophian was ignorant of making a proper use of that advantage which he might have gained from the superiority of his army, Mahomet, on the contrary, pushed his success after the defeat, with the utmost vigour. He, according to his usual custom, pretended a positive order from Heaven to attack the tribe of the Korashites, and concluded with his son-in-law the proper methods of reducing them. After having animated his soldiers against these idolaters, he attacked them in their forts, held them besieged twenty five days, and pressed them with so many difficulties, that they were obliged to surrender themselves to the discretion of the conqueror; these wretches, to the number of seven hundred, hoped the prophet would compassionate their persons, and be satisfied with taking their goods, and that he would grant them their liberty, as he had done to the tribe of Kainokan. But they deceived themselves with this hope, for Mahomet, who pretended not to take upon himself the determination of their fate, appointed for that purpose Saad, one of his commanders, who he knew was exasperated against them, because of a wound he received from one of them at the war of the ditch, of which wound he died, after
having

having glutted his revenge. Saad, by virtue of the authority he received from the prophet, determined that all the men should be beheaded, the women and children made slaves, and the goods divided among the soldiers. Mahomet ratified this barbarous judgment, and even pretended that GOD inspired the cruel Saad with it. Among the slaves he discovered a maiden of wonderful beauty, called Richana, whom he added to the number of his concubines; and she, in deference to her amorous master, soon after embraced his religion.

Nothing very extraordinary happened in the sixth year of the Hegira. The prophet marched against the tribes of Lahian and of Mustala. The first gained the mountains, and the latter were beaten. Mahomet found a new opportunity to gratify his amorous inclinations, in the person of Jeweira, daughter of one of the chiefs of the Mustalakites, whom he married; and out of indulgence to her, he set at liberty an hundred fathers of families who were her relations, and were taken in combat.

Upon his return from this expedition, Ayesha, the youngest of his wives, was suspected of an amour with a young man called Saffuan, who continually followed her. An attempt of this kind appeared so very scandalous to the friends of the prophet, that they advised him to divorce her. But after the most serious consideration, his passion for his wife, notwithstanding her inconstancy, surmounted all other regards, and, for ever to silence her accusers, he pretended a revelation from Heaven, by which Ayesha was fully justify'd and her honour established. He
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afterwards punished all those who advised him to divorce her, with eighty stripes of the whip, except Abdollah, whose great reputation in the army saved him from the disgrace of such a punishment.

As the followers of Mahomet could not always meet with the conveniency of water to wash and purify themselves in the manner as their law required, the prophet permitted them to use sand, or a particular kind of dust instead thereof. And he instituted this obligation about the time of which we now speak.

All the attempts of the prophet were followed with success. Whenever he offer'd his enemies battle, he either beat them, or they immediately betook themselves to flight. Thus, making a proper use of his good fortune, and of the confidence his troops reposed in him, he marched with fourteen hundred men towards the city of Mecca. A day's journey from the city, he met certain deputies of the Korashites, who assured him the people of Mecca were determined to refuse him entrance. Arwa was intrusted with this commission. And on the part of the prophet, Othman was commanded to find out Abu-Sophian, and to represent to him, that Mahomet undertook this journey merely to pay his devotions at the Kaaba, and to offer sacrifices there. Abu-Sophian suffered not himself to be deceived by this fair pretence; and far from returning a favourable answer, he put the messenger in chains. Mahomet waited impatiently the return of Othman; and when he could hear no account of him, he concluded the Korashites had put him to death. In this suspicion he swore he would not leave the place until he was revenged of their baseness;

baseness; which to accomplish with more success and glory, he then took upon him the sovereign authority, and in that quality he made his whole army take an oath to him. Notwithstanding Mahomet had but a handful of men, the Korashites dreaded him. They resolved to propose to him a truce, and appointed So-hail, the son of Amrus, to negotiate it. The propositions were well received by the prophet, and they agreed on either part, after some dispute about the form of a treaty, That the truce should be for ten years; that if among the Korashites, any of them inclined to join with Mahomet, they should have free liberty to do it; That in like manner such of the army of Mahomet, who should be desirous to retire to Mecca, among the Korashites, were equally left to their liberty; but if after the expiration of this truce, any one of the people of Mecca should go over to the army of Mahomet, they should be obliged to restore him; lastly, it was agreed, that Mahomet, or any of his followers, should be admitted to pass and repass into and out of the city, provided they enter'd it without arms, and stayed there no longer there than three days. All but the soldiers of Mahomet were pleased with these conditions: but they, having flatter'd themselves with the expectation of finding a booty in the city to satisfy their covetousness, and seeing themselves disappointed of their darling hope, could not suppress their complaints.

But in the expedition which their indefatigable commander prepared against the Jews of Chaibar, they soon found themselves sufficiently recompensed for their former disappointment. They were no sooner

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got to Medina, but they returned to besiege Chaibar, which they became masters of as well as all the forts in its dependance. Abu-Beker, who had the honour to carry the standard of the prophet, fought valiantly to conquer one of these forts, but in vain. Omar had no better success. That honour was reserved for the son-in-law of the prophet, notwithstanding he was then very much indisposed in his fight. Mahomet restored to him the use of his eyes, gave him his standard, and commanded him to attack that fort. But before he could make himself master of it, he fought a single combat with the Jew Marhab, whose head he cut off at one stroke of his sabre. Ali afterwards possessed himself of Chaibar and its fortresses, after having besieged it ten days. It is related on this occasion, that Ali, like another Samson, with his own hands tore down one of the gates of the city, of so great a weight, that eight men could scarce lift it from the ground; but he managed it with the same ease as he would have done a common buckler, to cover the prophet from the arrows which the besieged shower'd down upon him. However that was, they found in these places great quantity of provision of all kinds, proper to refresh the soldiers who had suffer'd considerably in the siege. Mahomet, on his part, gained a new wife in the person of Sephiah, who was then betrothed to a prince of that province, but she made no scruple to break her engagements in favour of the new conqueror of Arabia.

Fadac, another city of the Jews, had the same fate as Chaibar*. Wadilkora was also besieged and taken.

* The seventh year of the Hegira.

by the Musulmen ; whose inhabitants, as well as the inhabitants of other cities, of which we shall speak, were suffered to remain in peace ; in which condition they continued till the time of caliph Omar, who drove them out.

After this expedition Mahomet returned to Medina, where he found those disciples, who, in the beginning of his mission, had retired into Ethiopia, with Giafar their chief. He was extremely rejoiced to see them, and to recompence the zeal they had shewn for his interest, he gave them a share of the booty of Chaibar. Al-Nagiasb, king of Ethiopia, who had received these refugees into this kingdom, maintained so strict a friendship with Mahomet, that he thought it not below his dignity to espouse on his behalf the daughter of Abu-Sophian, the widow of Abdollah, who retired with her into his dominions, and died a Christian. Without doubt Mahomet negotiated this marriage to make himself acceptable to the chief of the Korashites, with a secret design of becoming master of Mecca ; imagining that this prince would respect in the person of a son-in-law, the most formidable of his enemies.

In this year a certain Jewess called Zainah, being desirous to try (as she afterwards confess'd) if Mahomet had really the gift of looking into futurity, poisoned a shoulder of mutton designed for his supper ; but the mutton itself failed not to acquaint him of the poison within it, tho' not till after it was cut ; for having put a bit in his mouth, notwithstanding he immediately took it out again, the poison mixed so fatally with his blood, that he languished ever after.

Mahomet

Mahomet, as we have already seen, having extended his conquests, and brought over the inhabitants of a great many Arabian provinces to his doctrine; he sent ambassadors to all the neighbouring princes to invite them to embrace it. Cosroes, the king of Persia, was the first who received this invitation, but far from returning a favourable answer, this haughty prince tore the letter, as we have related at large in the preceding book. The second was to the emperor Heraclius, who received the letter of Mahomet with respect, and sent back Dohia, who brought it, with presents. The third invitation was to Al-Mokawkas, prince of the Egyptians, who governed that province under Heraclius, and afterwards became a Musulman under caliph Omar. He received the envoy of Mahomet with marks of distinction; and well knowing the propensity of his master to the fair sex, he sent him a young maiden of great beauty called Maria, who sometime after was the mother of Ibrahim. To which present he added others of jewels, and of certain animals to ride upon, which were received with much inferior delight to the charming Egyptian whom the prophet preferred ever after to all his other wives. The fourth was to the king of Abissinia, who had embraced the Mahometan faith, as we have already related. The fifth was to Al-Hareth, a Gassanite prince, that reigned over a part of Arabia, who answered he would visit the prophet: In all appearance he meant with an army; since his answer was unwelcome to Mahomet. The sixth was to Howada, king of Yaman, who became a Mahometan, but he refused

refused at first to appear before the prophet, as he had by letter desired him; nevertheless he afterwards comply'd, and made publick profession of Mahometanism; but upon his return to his own dominions, he recanted that religion, and dared even to reproach the prophet, that he had joined to himself in the prophetick function a liar, called Mozailema. And the seventh invitation was to Mondar, king of Albahrain, upon the Persian gulph; he embraced Mahometanism, and afterwards obtained a great victory over the Persians; and all the Arabians of his kingdom received the religion of their prince.

During the continuance of the truce with the Korashites, Mahomet went to pay his devotions at the Kaaba: as he was very much tired, he gently walk'd but four times round it; but being afterwards come to the hills Safa and Merva, he run between those two eminences. In this journey he married Maimuna, the daughter of Al-Hareth, and was pleased that his uncle Al-Abbas should perform the ceremony of marriage, whom he invested with an honour for that purpose, that he had never conferred upon any person before.

The eighth year of the Hegira, Mahomet sent against the subjects of Heraclius, who inhabited a city of Syria, called Muta (where one of his deputies was killed by an Arabian, an inhabitant of that district) an army of three thousand men, and appointed three generals, Zaid, Giafar, and Abdollah, to the end, that if the first was killed, the second might succeed him, who was also to be succeeded by the third, in case he was killed. If the Arabian authors are to be believed,

believed, the Romans with an army of one hundred thousand men opposed that of Mahomet, and lost the battle, after a very obstinate fight. Chalib, the son of Al-Walid, gained all the glory of that victory : who, after the three generals abovementioned were slain, was elected into their command by the unanimous consent of the army, and who made it sufficiently appear by his skill and courage, he was truly worthy of that authority. He returned to Medina with his victorious soldiers, and after having affected Mahomet with sorrow, by the relation of the deaths of his three generals, he received from him the surname of The sword of GOD, by which he was ever after called.

Two years had not passed after the conclusion of the truce, before it was violated by the Korashites, who attacked the tribe of the Cozaites, related to the prophet. Abu-Sophian, to prevent the consequences of this particular quarrel, went himself to Medina, hoping to appease his son-in-law, and to find in the person of his daughter, a powerful intercessor on his behalf. But after having in vain urged Mahomet to return a favourable answer to a propos'd accommodation, he returned to Mecca, as much displeased with Mahomet as enraged against his daughter, who would scarce condescend to speak to him ; and who had dared to reproach him that he was an idolater, but her husband was the apostle of GOD. The prophet would not lose this opportunity, but laid hold of it as a fair pretence to render himself master of a city that had no regard to treaties. He then contrived the proper preparatives for
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that important expedition so very secretly, that he was in a manner at the gates of Mecca before they were informed of his departure from Medina. It was not for want of the endeavours of Hateb, one of the chiefs of Mahomet's army, that the people of Mecca were not informed in time of the designs against them. Being touched with compassion for the outrages which he foresaw his native city must undergo, from an exasperated general and greedy soldiery, tired out with a long war, and more especially for the little infants of the place, he gave notice to the Korashites of Mahomet's expedition. And that his letter might more certainly reach them, he committed it to the care of Sarah his servant maid, who immediately set forward with it. But Mahomet, informed of this management by revelation, immediately dispatched Ali and Zobair, who overtook the maiden, intercepted the letter, and brought it back to Mahomet. He then commanded Hateb before him, and asked him how he came to be guilty of such a treason? Hateb justified himself in the best manner he could, and obtained the prophet's pardon, notwithstanding the endeavours of Omar, who would have had him punished with death.

These preparations being accomplished, Mahomet left Medina, and marched towards Mecca, at the head of ten thousand men. A day's journey from the city he encamped his army, and appointed Omar to guard the camp; he likewise commanded that ten thousand fires should be kept burning all the night, and that the guard should be disposed in such a manner, that no person should have opportunity to inform of the nearness

nearness of his approach. Al-Abbas, the uncle of the prophet, remained still at Mecca, notwithstanding his adherence to the doctrine of his nephew. He persuaded Abu-Sophian to go to the prophet, to pay him homage as his lawful sovereign, and embrace his religion. Abu-Sophian followed this advice, and accompanied with Al-Abbas, he went to present himself before Mahomet. As soon as Omar beheld this antient enemy of the prophet, he ran to Mahomet, and desired leave to kill him: but he was refused, and Mahomet assured Abu-Sophian, he should receive no insult in his camp. This interview was followed by another, when Mahomet entirely persuaded Abu-Sophian to become a Musulman. Afterwards Mahomet ordered each of his lieutenants to surround the place. Some historians relate that it did not surrender till after a vigorous resistance, attended with a great slaughter on both sides. Others say that it only made an appearance of defence, and that the Musulmen might have become masters of it without a blow, had not Chaleb engaged with a troop of Korashites, who resisted his advancing into the plain.

Mahomet, now possessed of this important place, set himself entirely to destroy the worship of idols, which they then practised. To that end he threw down the images which had hitherto been the objects of the Arabians adoration. He afterwards sanctified, by his example, the visitation of the temple, and that of the Kaaba, by walking seven times round those places esteemed holy.

The prophet having in this manner finished his religious duties, he condemned to death some certain persons, who had testified the warmest zeal against him.

These

These were ten in all, six men and four women, but the greater number saved their lives by embracing Mahometanism.

After Mahomet had given directions concerning all affairs in Mecca, he sent Chalib, the son of Al-Walid, with the troops to invite the inhabitants of the neighbouring provinces to submit to his religion and empire. But he forbade him to employ any other methods than kindness and persuasion. Nevertheless Chaleb, instead of observing his orders, took that opportunity to revenge the death of one of his uncles, who was killed by a certain person of that tribe to which he was sent, and put to the sword a troop of the unhappy Giadimites, notwithstanding they were come out to meet him, and although he had promised them not only their lives, but the quiet possession of their goods, provided they consented to embrace Mahometanism. The monarch of Arabia thought an example of justice and moderation was due to his new subjects. He therefore highly disapproved this proceeding of his officer, and called GOD to witness he was innocent of it. He moreover endeavoured to repair the mischief that was done, and sent Ali, his son-in-law, to pay to the relations of the slain, the price of the blood that was spilt, and to restore to them the spoils of those unhappy victims.

That same year, the eighth of the Hegira, several tribes re-united their forces under one chief, called Malec, to put a stop to the conquests of Mahomet, and to free themselves from his government. The prophet marched out of Mecca with twelve thousand men to give them battle: the two armies being met

in the valley of Honaina, between Mecca and Tayif, Mahomet believed he was going to a certain victory, in as much as his army was superior in number to that of his enemies; besides his soldiers were inured to war, and animated by the proximity of the capital city of their new empire; so that he persuaded himself he had nothing to do but to face his enemies to put them to flight. But he had the mortification to see his troops routed at the first onset, and disorder'd in such a manner, that it seem'd impossible to stop them in their flight. He employ'd all his address to rally them; and having done it, he fell upon the enemy with such fury, that he put them to flight in their turn.

Mahomet afterwards besieged Tayif; he batter'd it for twenty days without being able to take it, and after having raised the siege, he retired to a neighbouring city, where he had left the booty taken some time before at the victory of Honaina, over the tribes commanded by Malec. These tribes sent ambassadors to Mahomet to desire him to restore them their wives, their children, and all that was taken from them. He gave them their choice, offering to restore them their wives and children, or their cattle and goods; and having chosen the first, their effects were divided among the soldiers of Mahomet. But their general, Malec, who lost more than any of them, by this accommodation, became of the party of Mahomet, profess'd his religion, and obtained the restitution of all that was his.

The division of the booty of which we now speak, caused great contentions afresh in the army of the Mussulmen. The Ansars, who till then were indulged rather more, at least treated equally with the Mohagerins,

rins, were denied their share of the present spoil, which turned to the advantage of the principal persons of Mecca. This partiality gave occasion to the murmurings of a certain person called Dhull Chowaisara, and to a prediction of Mahomet, who foretold, that from the posterity of that Ansar should arise the various sects that divide his religion even to this day.

After this expedition Mahomet returned to Mecca, visited the temple, and having appointed Oth, the son of Ofaid, to govern the city, and Maad, the son of Giakal, to instruct the people, he took a journey to Medina. In this year Mahomet had a son born to him, of the Egyptian damsel which the prince of Egypt sent him, named Ibrahim.

The ninth year of the Hegira is celebrated by different embassies, sent to him by the princes of Arabia, as well to congratulate him on his victories, as to acknowledge themselves his tributaries. They complimented him in this manner, because they were not able to resist so powerful an enemy, and they chose rather to submit with a good grace, than hazard a war which could not but be fatal to them.

Having thus subjected almost all Arabia, Mahomet declared a design he had formed to lead his victorious army against the Romans; not thinking it proper to hide from his soldiers, as he commonly had done, the fatigues and dangers he foresaw that expedition would expose them to. For which reason they undertook this war with regret; because of the distance of the place to which they were to march, and also because of the strength of the enemy they were to encounter. But tho' the soldiers shewed so great a disinclination to

this expedition to Syria, yet the chiefs of the army testified the utmost zeal and eagerness in contributing each one according to his power, every thing that was necessary to become victorious. He took the field after this in the most intense heats of summer, with an army of twenty thousand foot and ten thousand horse. After many days march they arrived at the city of Tabuc, belonging to the Grecian emperor, of which he became master, and where he received the deputies of many Christian princes, who obliged themselves to pay him an annual tribute, on condition he would permit them to possess their territories in peace. After which he returned to Medina, where he found the envoys of the city of Tayiff, who offered to submit to his empire, and embrace his religion, provided he would indulge them in paying a religious worship to their favourite idol. But the prophet would in no wise grant their requests, and exacted from them an entire and absolute submission to his religion. Neither would he dispense with the omission of any of the prayers appointed by his law, which seem to be in too great a number. He answered to this proposition, that there could be nothing good in that religion which did not appoint prayer. About the end of the ninth year of the Hegira, Mahomet sent Abu-Beker and A. to Mecca on a solemn pilgrimage, and to regulate the ceremonies which were to be observed on such occasions, for the time to come.

* The power of the impostor being so considerably augmented; the terror of his arms astonish'd to such a degree those among the Arabians who had not felt

* The 10th year of the Hegira.

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their force, that they flocked from every part to submit themselves to the new conqueror. And as his empire and religion always accompany'd each other, both of them were fully established this year, throughout the provinces of Arabia; to all which he soon after sent lieutenants to abolish the antient worship, and to govern in his name.

After having taken proper measures to confirm himself in his conquests, Mahomet went to Mecca to pay his devotions, and to perform that pilgrimage which he himself had instituted. He entered the city the tenth day of the month Dulhaga, which they have solemnized ever since on that account. He added certain ceremonies to those which he had before established, and addressed many exhortations to the people, who were gather'd together from all parts of the city to behold their new master. He returned afterwards to Medina. This journey of Mahomet to Mecca, is called by his followers the farewell Pilgrimage, because indeed it was the last that he made. Although Mahomet was arrived to so eminent a pitch of glory and power, he found other impostors attempt to imitate him, who, in taking upon themselves the title of prophet, ~~proposed~~, like him, to arrive at that of king. Mofailem, ~~Mosawad~~, Taliha, and others, played the same part, but not with the same success as him after whose model they proposed to form themselves: for they were all overcome and obliged to submit themselves either to Mahomet or to his caliphs.

* The prophet, who had always been affected with the poisoned morsel which the Jews of Chaibar had

* The 11th Year of the Hegira.

prepared for him, felt his disorders redouble, which were accompanied with so violent a pain of his head, and so great a fever, that at last threw him into a delirium. During the first days of his illness, he never ceased to frequent the mosque at the hours of prayer; and as he was sensible of his approaching death, he was desirous, by a publick declaration, to give proofs of his justice and his humility. "Men of Arabia," says he, "if I have commanded any one to be whipp'd, behold my back, which I offer to suffer as much. If I have wounded the reputation of any one, I consent he should serve mine in the same manner. If I have taken money unjustly of any one, here is my purse, let him take what belongs to him. Let no person fear incurring my resentment by impeaching me; certainly neither my manners nor my natural disposition will suffer me to hurt him on that account." After this discourse, he descended from the pulpit to perform noon-day prayer. Which having finished, and made particular mention of those who died in the battle of Ohud; as he attempted to remount the pulpit to continue his discourse, he was interrupted by a certain person who mention'd three drachmas, which he said were due to him. Mahomet gave them to him immediately, adding, that it was much better to suffer dishonour in this world than in that which was to come.

Mahomet finding himself grow worse, was desirous to give his orders to his faithful Ansars before he died. He ordered the principal among them before him, and recommended to them two things; first, not to suffer any idolatry in the peninsula of Arabia; and
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secondly, to grant the same privileges to those who embraced their religion, as they themselves enjoyed. Being soon after fallen into a delirium, he called for pen and ink, in order to write a book; the reading of which should preserve his disciples from falling into any kind of error. But Omar would not suffer it to be brought him, saying, "That the Alcoran was sufficient; and that the prophet was so very much disordered, that he knew not what he said."

To conclude, Mahomet died, after fourteen or fifteen days sickness, between the sixty third and sixty fourth years of his life, upon a Saturday, according to the Musulmen, the second day of the week, in the former Rabia. Ali and Al-Abbas washed his body, cloathed it with three garments, and buried it two days after in the chamber of his wife Ayeshah, where he chose to die. His death filled the greatest part of his followers with astonishment and fear. They would not believe him to be dead, nor suffer him to be buried. Omar was of this opinion, and transported to such a degree, that he drew his sabre, and vow'd to kill the first person who should dare to report that Mahomet was dead. But Abu-Beker would not suffer Omar and the people to continue long in their error. He quitted the place where the body of Mahomet was, came out, and addressing himself to them, "Do you adore Mahomet," says he, "or the GOD of Mahomet? If you adore the GOD of Mahomet, he is immortal, and shall live eternally; but for Mahomet, I assure you he is dead." He afterwards proved to them, by divers passages in the Alcoran, that Mahomet was to die like other men. This dispute

pute ended, there arose another, where they should bury the prophet. The Mohagerins would have his corpse transported to Mecca; the Ansars, that it should remain at Medina; and others, that it should be buried at Jerusalem, the city of the prophets. But Abu-Beker assured them, that he had often heard Mahomet say, "That the prophets ought to be buried at the places where they died." This opinion prevail'd, and Mahomet was buried at Medina, as we have before observed.

Thus ends the life of this celebrated impostor, who, from a private merchant of a caravan, became monarch of Arabia, founded an empire that was about eighty years in raising to an eminent degree of glory and power, and at last was destroy'd; but out of the ruins of which three great monarchies were formed, that subsist to this day.

7 JULY 1755

F I N I S.

